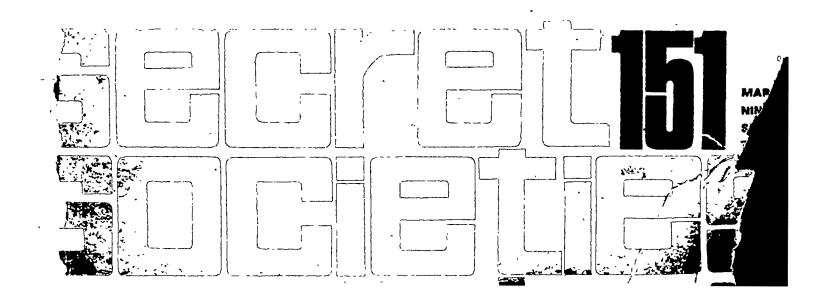
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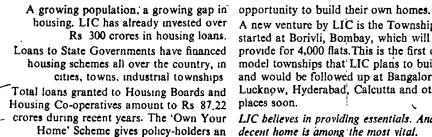
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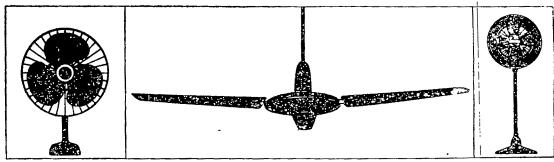
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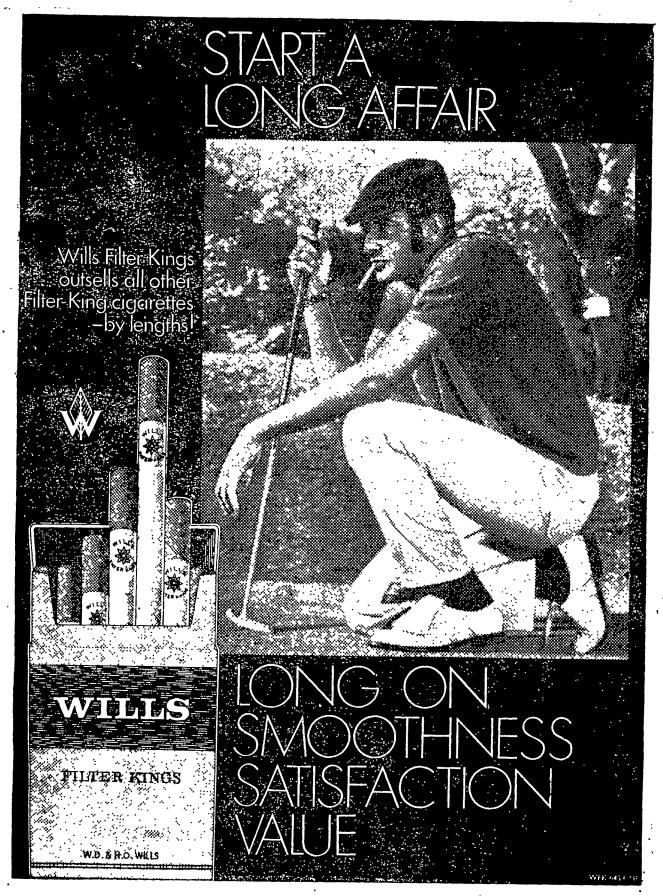
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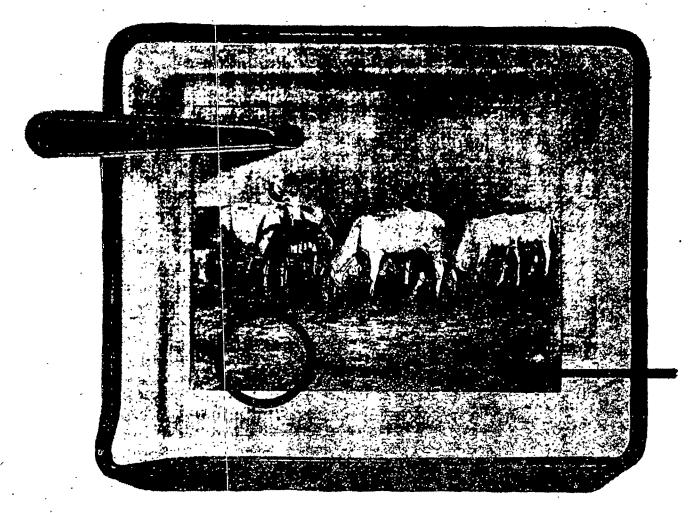


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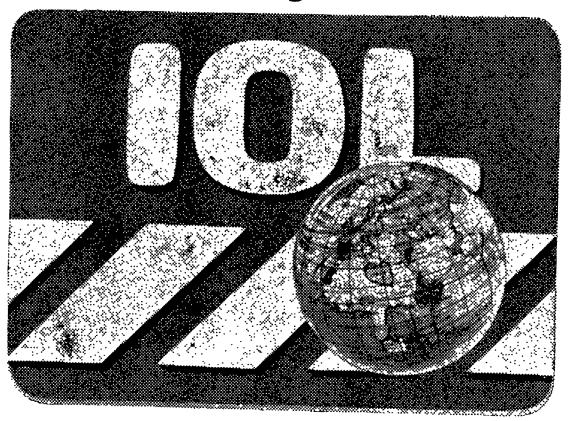
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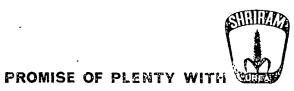
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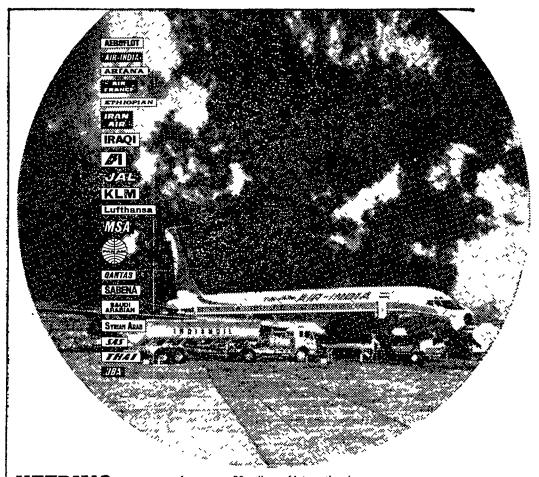
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sher/ROMESH THAPAR

managing editor/RAJ THAPAR

production/TEJBIR SINGH

circulation/C. B. KUN

iblished from Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi-1. Telephone: 46534. Cable Address: 'Seminar, New Delhi'. Single copy: Rs. N. pence; 70 cents (\$). Yearly Rs. 20; £ 2.15; \$ 6. Three Yearly: Rs. 50; £ 7.10; \$ 16. Reproduction of material prohibited unless permitte

IEXT MONTH: WEST BENGAL



SECRET SOCIETIES

a symposium on our under-cover political activities

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

A brief statement of the issues involved

RSS

D. R. Goyal, Editor 'Secular D'emocracy'

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI

Moin Shakir, Department of Political Science, Marathwada University

ANAND MARG

N. K. Singh, Journalist, Patna correspondent of several magazines

SHIV SENA

K. K. Gangadharan, Reader in Sociology, Christ Church College, Kanpur

GOPAL SENA

V. K. Madhavan Kutty, Chief of the Delhi News Bureau, 'Mathrubhumi'

BOOKS

A review article by Ances Chishti

FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography compiled by ${\bf D.}$ C. Sharma

COMMUNICATIONS

Received from Gopal Krishna (Delhi)

COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury

The problem

The secret society is the child of the philosophy of despotism, and the despotism can be of the political, temporal or social variety. It organises either to challenge these despotisms or seeks their enthronement. In India, secret societies have only now and then punctuated the broadly open and visible activity of the masses of the people and the elites which have risen to lead them. Secretiveness has not been part of the ethos of this sub-continent. However, in the context of a modernising nation, religious and regional revivalism has sought secret forms to propagate its motivating cults. Some of the material carried in this issue will startle the uninitiated. The activities of these secret societies have a sinister accent, but the fact remains that the trappings of such societies are similar wherever you find themin Shanghai, in Washington, in Tokyo, in Corsica, in Calcutta. They are social aberrations and must be tackled within the dimensions of the economic and political policies which condition the growth of society.

Rss

D. R. GOYAL

IN 1949, when the RSS was under a legal ban, the RSS chief, M. S. Golwalkar, sought an interview with Prime Minister 'Jawaharlal Nehru in order to explain his point of view. The request was turned down on the ground that the meeting would not serve any useful purpose because what the RSS leader said, and what his organisation did, had no relationship with each other.

The gap between precept and practice is true of all organisations dealing with human affairs, but the RSS is unique in that

what it says or shows is mostly meant to hide the reality. Ostensibly, it provides opportunity and occasion for group games and group life to young people. The leadership of the organisation claims that it is engaged in cultural work. The daily activity is said to be a means of organising Hindu society and promoting Hindu culture. They have yet to convince the public about the relationship between physical exercise and culture.

If one analyses the speeches and discussions heard in the Shakhas, one finds that there is hardly anything cultural about them. Never does one come across any opinion or comment on philosophy, literature, the arts, history or the values of life which may be called the various components of Hindu culture. Whenever any references are made to these things, it is only to use them as a means to rouse sentiment. The ideological instruction imparted by the RSS is nothing but political. They talk about nationalism and lay down conditions for accepting people as true nationals. They comment on various legislations passed by the various legislatures. They express opinions about the qualities of leadership and do not refrain even from crossing the limits of decency. They talk not only about relations between various sections of the people in India but also about relations with other countries.

To be political is no crime and in a democracy every individual and association has a right to act politically. exercise of political choice and discrimination is, in fact, a sign of maturity, responsibility and self-confidence. On the other hand, if an organisation tries to camouflage its character and objectives, as the RSS does, there is every reason to be suspicious. And, people who have watched it closely with their eyes open are suspicious. The insiders and officials of the RSS are generally non-communicative, particularly with outsiders. Questions are discouraged and when pestered they try to wriggle out of the situation either with an apparently gentle smile or with a diverting joke or comment. Those who are regular members get the following catechism by way of information about the objectives of the organisation.

- Q: What is the aim of the RSS?
- A: Sanghe Shakti Kalo-yuge. In this era of Kali organisation is power. If you have power you can do whatever you like. Therefore, orga-

- nisation, that is power, is an end in itself.
- Q: What shall we do with power?
- A: Let us have power first.

 Then we shall decide the use. We are not like others who issue manifestos.

This is no part of a stray conversation or a figment of the imagination. This questionanswer set is repeated times without number in each shakha. If it sounds fascist, they do not mind. Gandhiji, with his uncanny insight, was able to describe it aptly when he called it 'a totalitarian organisation with a communal outlook'.

The RSS has all the characteristics of a fascist outfit. main one is the mysterious halo that is built around the head of the organisation. Its organisational philosophy is described as Ek chalakanuvartitva which means following one leader. The RSS chief is described as a personage with superhuman qualities. Some years ago when he got cancer, most of the swayamsewaks did not believe it. Even the RSS headquarters kept back the news till Golwalkar was obliged to get admission in a Bombay hospital and it was no longer possible to keep it a private affair. Numerous stories are fed to members and sympathisers about his phenomenal memory and scholarship. In the more orthodox circles, parti-cularly in the South, he is pre-sented as a sanyasi. There are instances where women washed his feet as if he were a holy

No doubt legends grow about a personage with the growth of his or her personality. The difference is that whereas in the case of other leaders the legends generally have a bearing on their qualities of head and heart and are based on their public performance, in the case of Golwalkar legends are fostered and spread before he or the organisation is known to the people.

Young people are told that Golwalkar does not have to read the daily newspapers; he gets to know them through his sadhana.

A bout his scholarship, one has only to read the booklet, We or Our Nationhood Defined. It was the basic ideological text until 1966. The way in which several theories of nationalism are mentioned, one gets an impression that the author is erudite but the dis-illusionment sets in when one looks for the references. No author and no book from where the ideas are picked up is mentioned. More recently it has come to light that the booklet was not originally written by Golwalkar. No honest scholar would arrogate to himself the thoughts and ideas of any other person but the RSS and its chief concealed these facts from even their own followers for over a quarter century. As the truth began to appear, the booklet was withdrawn from circulation.

The word of Golwalkar is the final word for members of the Nobody is expected to argue with him or question the wisdom of his statements. There may, of course, be the advisers and consultants but none is ever credited with any initiative. This attitude is camouflaged as discipline but in fact it is part of the stratagem to build a super-man image of the chief. Another very glaring fact to be noted in this context is that even the founder of the RSS has been eclipsed. A biography has been published recently but no speech or statement has been brought to light even though for the first 15 years Dr. Hedgewar headed and led the organisation. The ideas attributed to him are nowhere presented in his own words. Several people close to the organisation have a feeling that to recast the organisation in the image of the present chief and to divert total allegiance to him, the role of the founder has been minimised.

In terms of ideological projection, too, it is typically fascist.

Maximum stress is laid on issues which are capable of emotionally agitating the mind and which have no relevance to real life. Golwalkar has been critical of Nehru and others for laying stress on the standard of living of the people. He prefers to talk of abstract things like personal and national the character rather than the dayto-day problems of the people. Presentation of the slogan of Indianisation against that of Nationalisation is typical of RSS thinking.

Of Hindu culture and Hindu religion, they talk endlessly but all this talk has nothing to do with the spiritual aspects of Hinduism. The supreme quality of Hinduism (or for that matter of any religion) which has won it the respect of the world, is its spiritualistic content which brings peace through harmonising the mind of the individual with the universe. But that is not the RSS cup of tea. It takes up only the superficial ritualistic aspects like cow-worship, wearing the sacred thread and the top-tuft. The aim is not to create harmony but contention and confrontation.

Within the country, the RSS creates confrontation between Hindus and non-Hindus. For that purpose it instigates and promotes agitations on issues like cow-protection, Hindi language, music in front of mosques, uniformity of culture, uniformity of the civil code. The intention behind all of this is to isolate the non-Hindus and to show them up as alien elements. There are numerous instances when the RSS has spread rumours about highly placed persons calculated to bring in doubt their loyalty to the na-The RSS hand is seen behind the communal riots because they are invariably preceded by such rumours.

In international relations, the RSS attitude is what may be called chauvinistic. According

to its chief, Hindus alone possess the knowledge and spiritual power to save humanity. It would be all right if it were said in the philosophical sense in which followers of all religions talk, but the RSS without spelling out the content of Hinduism, insists on building an organised force and dominating the world. The expansionist world-scale aims are not clearly spelt out in writing but the intentions are clear from the ideal of the past that Golwalkar has presented in his book, Bunch of Thoughts.

'Our arms stretched as far as America on the one side—that was long before Columbus 'discovered' America!—and on the other side to China, Japan, Cambodia, Malaya, Siam, Indonesia and all the South-East Asian countries and right up to Mongolia and Siberia in the North.'

And lest one should mistake it for just-cultural influence, he makes it explicit in the sentence following: 'Our powerful political empire too spread over these South-East areas and continued for 1400 years, Shailendra empire alone flourishing for over 700 years,—standing as a powerful bulwork against Chinese expansion.'

The membership of the RSS is variously estimated to be between half a million and two millions. No official figures are given. On asking an official source, the answer received was 'can you count how many drops of water the holy Ganga has in it?' Apart from the obvious attempt to mystify, the respondent perhaps had no idea. At no level is there a register of membership. Nor is there any verifiable process. That is the main reason why it is almost impossible to fix any responsibility on the RSS. Supposing a member of the organisation is caught spreading rumours, inciting mob violence or actually indulging in killing, loot and arson, there is no way

of proving in the court that he is a member of the RSS.

Nathu Ram Godse assassinated Gandhiji. People said he was an RSS man. The RSS denied it and the matter stayed there until four years ago, Graig Baxter in his book, Jana Sangh, revealed the fact that Godse was one of the first group of young men that joined the RSS and that he had toured Maharashtra with Dr. Hedgewar in as early as 1930. Even now the the RSS insists that Godse had nothing to do with it at the time he committed the crime. How can one establish the veracity of this denial in the absence of any official record? difficulty is faced even in implementing the restriction on government employees (whenever imposed) that they cannot participate in RSS activities. It also handicaps the police in establishing its complicity in riots.

The RSS constitution, as submitted to the Government of India, lays down that minors would not be admitted without explicit permission from their guardians. The provision is observed only in the breach and there is no method of enforcement. In a difficult situation, a member can deny his connection or the organisation can disown him. This aspect of the RSS makes it most suspicious in the eyes of the people.

No less suspicious is the financial side of the RSS. As there is no regular registered membership, there is no regular collection of fee. No receipts are ever issued to any donors or contri-, butors. That the organisation has enormous funds at its disposal should be clear from the fact that it has the largest number of full time paid workers in the country. Almost up to the tehsil and taluka level, it has its network of full time organisers. The RSS has also built property in several towns although it has not so far been assessed for income-tax or wealth tax.

The mode of collection is called Guru Dakshina. Every shakha

observes a day in the year when all the members put money in a box placed before the saffron flag of the RSS which is described as the *Guru* of the organisation. No one is supposed to know how much another has contributed. Months before that day, lectures are delivered to induce members to make the maximum contribution. Young boys are told mythological stories which stress the sacred importance of such a contribution.

All the boxes are collected at the district headquarters where they are opened and the money counted. The amount from each district is sent to the State headquarters. The collections in the States finally converge to the centre at Nagpur. At the lower rungs, nobody is ever able to know how much total collection has come. The money for expenditure is given by the centre. It is very difficult to say with certainty that the organisational expenses are met only out of guru dakshina col-lections and that no funds from objectionable sources, Indian and foreign, are mixed in at some level.

This being the character and mode of functioning, one cannot but conclude that it is a secret organisation. The RSS leaders, however, protest that they are not a secret organisation but a silent organisation, that they avoid publicity and exhibitionism. Their claim could have been accepted as true if it were really silent without route marches with brass bands, mass rallies and huge wall-posters proclaiming loudly the smallest contribution to social work. The claim also becomes doubtful when the officers of the RSS tell lies about the kind of training given in the training camps. It was pointed out some time ago that in one such camp in Delhi, training in the use of the dagger was being imparted. information was promptly denied. Later, when a press photographer tried to take a photograph of the training class in the camp, he was beaten up. And when the photograph actually appeared in the press, the same official turned round and said that it was only a part of normal physical exercise.

So far as exhibitionism is concerned, the RSS trained leaders of the Jana Sangh surpass everybody else in the country. Here again there have been conflicting statements. At different times the leaders of the Jana Sangh have owned and denied their association with and allegiance to the RSS. It was said at the time of the formation of the Jana Sangh that the RSS had put its most trusted cadre in key positions. The late Deen Dayal Upadhyaya was the provincial organiser of the U.P. RSS before he took over as General Secretary of the Jana Sangh. For years they went on denying that he had any connection with the parent organisation. The truth came out when, after his death, Balasaheb Deoras, the General Secretary of the RSS, praised him as 'an ideal swayamsewak' and asserted that 'his first loyalty was to the RSS'.

A careful study of the two organisations shows that the Jana Sangh is only a front organisation of the RSS created to work in the political field. The RSS has promoted front organisations in other spheres as well. There is the Vidyarthi Parishad for students, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh in the field of trade unions, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to work among the religious groups etc., etc.

Some people mistakenly consider all these as front organisations of the Jana Sangh. They are all separate and independent and owe direct loyalty and responsibility to the RSS leadership which directs, controls and coordinates their activities.

The Rashtriya Swayamsewak, thus, is like an iceberg. What is seen on the surface is only a fraction of the whole.

Jamaat-e-islami

MOIN SHAKIR

THE Jamaat-e-Islami for the last thirty years has been championing the cause of a closed system in the garb of Islam in the country. It has been making a concerted effort to reorient the outlook of the Muslims in particular and the non-Muslims in general, which is not in consonance with the basic requirement of an open society. Its ideology, programme, leadership structrue, and organization is a bulwark of reaction and obscurantism. The Jamaat constitutes an 'impassable wall' between orthodox Islam and modernity, aiming at the fact that the Muslims should not be exposed to the latter.

Thus, the Jamaat may be looked upon as a line of defence for those Indian Muslims who had remained within a closed society, apprehending any change in the status quo as being suicidal to Islam. It always emphasised the need for maintaining the principle of the so-called continuity of the socio-

political, cultural and the spiritual ethos of Islam. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Jamaat rejected all the reform movements, like that of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and stood against modernizing ideas and ideals by characterizing them as the malignant vestiges of alien ideologies.

The Jamaat was founded by Maulana. Syeed Abud Ala Maudoodi in August, 1941, on whose initiative seventy five persons assembled at Lahore. were among them the Ulema as well as university graduates, labourers, artisans and professional men. Its object was the establishment of Deen (religion), which meant the revival of Islamic values and ideals in the life of the people. What was implied in it was the rejection of the operative ideas of democracy, socialism, nationalism and secularism. Maulana Maudoodi maintained that modern European or American democracy, Bolshevik regimentation, fascist

apotheosis, the Turkish revolt from Islam, were not satisfactory conditions at all. The only State for Muslims, for that matter for all the world was one of 'Islamic theocracy'. This theocracy has its constitution and laws conferred by God, the Shariat of Islam—'permanent, rigid and unamendable'.

In this system, the whole activity of life is directed according to the guiding principle of religion. The women behind purdah stay which keeps them from becoming a 'hell on this earth' and 'storm centres of that satanic liberty which woman is seeking and which is threatening to demolish the entire structure of human civilization'.2 In such a social set up, the fine arts are denied their proper place. There is no question of the autonomy of the individual as he merges into the Islamic solidarity myth.

Against this background, the Jamaat took a firm stand opposing the Congress and the Muslim League. As regards the Congress, the Jamaat believed that it (Congress) was manned by either Hindu revivalists or communists, both equally dangerous to the Muslims and Islam. The Muslim League, according to the Jamaat, consisted of those who had the least interest in Islam and Islamic culture; and the establishment of Pakistan would amount to the success of Muslim nationalism and democracy and not that of Islam and Islamic polity. Thus, the Jamaat's ideological posture implied opposition to social reform and political change along the lines of modernization.3

After the partition of the country, Maulana Maudoodi migrated to Pakistan. He effected a somersault and tried to convince the Pakistan people

that their leaders had promised to establish an Islamic State in Pakistan. He surmounted political difficulties by playing up the religious sentiments of the people with a fair degree of success. The weakness of the leaders of the Pakistani movement who did not care to educate the people in secularism, was exploited by Maudoodi.

In India, the situation was qualitatively different. Not that secularism had firm roots in this country, but the forces obscurantism were rendered ineffective by the liberal and secular leadership of the Congress, particularly that of Nehru. secular constitution was drafted; equal rights, irrespective of religious considerations, were granted to all; and cultural safeguards were provided to the minorities. Power was transferred to the people to elect their rulers and decide their destiny.

In these circumstances, the Jamaat-e-Islami (Hind), which was established in April 1948, should have found itself an anachronism. But, the social backwardness and the religious dogmatism of the Indian Mus-lims allowed the Jamaat to assume an ideologically militant character. However, the partition and the independence of the country did not bring any change in the policy or the character of the Jamaat. The object of the establishment of Deen remained unchanged. According to the constitution of the Jamaat, Deen 'encompasses the exterior and interior of man as well as all individual and social aspects of his life. There is not even a single aspect of human life ranging from beliefs, devotional works and morals to economic, social and political aspects which may be beyond its pale.'

'Just as this Deen is a guarantee for divine pleasure and success in the hereafter, so it is also the most excellent system of life for the proper solution of worldly problems, and righteous and progressive construction of

individual and social life is possible only through its establishment.' Such a Deen is Islam and Islam alone. It is dynamic religion and a perfect code of life.

Islam has been propounded by the leaders of the Jamaat as the sovereign remedy to the problems of man. The real cause of the suffering of the modern man is his indifference to the Divine Message. In his behaviour, the modern man is moti-vated by materialism or this worldliness, which is responsible for all the ills of contemporary The present social society. structure is without ethical foundations. Islam alone has the potential to fill in the moral vacuum by emphasising a high standard of morality and righteousness. What is needed is a religious revolution and sharpening of the religious consciousness of the people. This spiritual revolution can be brought about by the righteous Muslim who constitutes the Khair-e-Ummat, the chosen virtuous among the people. They are a symbol of goodness and blessed with divine light. These Muslims are not a community or minority or a geographical entity but by superceding them are made into a party—the party of God (Hizenllah)

F or the attainment of this objective, the Jamaat declared that in all its actions it would be bound by moral limits and would never adopt such means or ways which were against truth and honesty or would give rise to communal hatred, class struggle and Fasad fil arz5 (social chaos, discord, anarchy, corruption, or mischief in the land). The Jamaat also chose to adopt constructive and peaceful methods' of reforming the mental outlook, character and conduct through the propagation (of Islam), instruction and dissemination of Islamic ideas, training

Maudoodi: The Islamic conception of State. Aligarh 1940. p. 20

^{2.} *Ibid.*, p. 20.

For the details see Moin Shakır: Khilafat to Partition. Kalamkar Prakashan, New Delhi, 1970 pp. 216. 263.

^{4.} The Constitution of the Jamaat-e-Islami (Hind). 2nd edition Delhi, 1966 pp. 4-5.

^{5.} Ibid. p. 5.

public opinion in order to bring about the desired righteous revolution in the social life of the country.6 The Jamaat, therefore, claims to be 'a non-communal party working democratically for a moral and spiritual reorientation of outlook?.7

The Jamaat was aware that the immediate problem resulting from the partition of the country was of communalism and the exchange of population. The Jamaat counselled restraint to the Muslims in the face of many provocations. It worked for the restoration of confidence among the Muslims of India who had been totally demoralised by the partition of the country and its aftermath. In all this, the motive of the Jamaat was religious. It exhorted the Muslims to keep their faith in God. They should not despair about their future. The real field of work was the land of their birth.8

The leaders of the Jamaat conveniently forgot that the exchange of the entire Muslim population was physically imposssible and that the task was to give a secular orientation to the thinking and politics of Indian Muslims. But. Jamaat was averse to a realistic assessment of its position on almost all duestions facing the country and the Muslim com-munity. It launched a vehement attack against the forces of modernization such as nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy.

The history of the Jamaat since 1941 shows that it condemned as 'un-Islamic' any idea or institution which had no roots in the medieval and feudal spirit of Islam. The question of nationalism is an example. There is perhaps no Muslim writer who has written so much against Indian nationalism as Maudoodi. In Pakistan and

India, the Jamaat has been propagating the doctrine of Islamic solidarity as against nationalism, ignoring its implications and consequences, particularly in India. Abul Lais Islahi, the present chief of the Jamaat, holds that nationalism is another name for selfishness. It is far more condemnable than individual selfishness.9 He believes that to a nationalist everything rooted in the past in 'an object of adoration'.

The Indian situation is characterized by immorality, dishonesty, corruption, inefficiency; in short, moral degeneration. The source of all the ills of society is nationalism. The Muslims, being 'the best of the people' should come forward to eradicate the evil of nationalism, A. L. Islahi exhorts. They should not think in terms of their 'national rights'. Nationalism is harmful from the worldly as well as the religious point of view. 10

The idea behind this attitude is that Muslims are not a 'nation' or a 'community'. Their problems and difficulties are not those of Islam. They are an ideological group to enforce the will of God. This is the way to secure power by demonstrating the futility of secular, democratic or parliamentary government. If the Muslims accept nationalism it tantamounts to disowning the divine guidance and principles which the Muslims alone possess.

The rejection of secularism is inherent in the criticism of nationalism. According to the Jamaat, Islam cannot be separated from politics and the separation of the two dehumanizes mankind. Secularism is nothing but 'irreligiousness'. It is not only 'a theory and it is not confined to a few aspects of human life but has become an operative principle in all walks of life. Democracy, nationalist dictatorship, and socialism are the products of this secular way of life.'11

The Jamaat's abhorrence of secularism is so strong that it prefers a religious State on the basis of the religious scriptures of the Hindus in India.12 It is no accident that the Jamaat is closer to Hindu obscurantist organizations. We do not deny the value and worth of some of the slogans of the Hindu Mahasabha for example, it is against secularism and supports the incorporation of the religious, ethical values in the political life of the people,'13 says A. L. Islahi. Ideologically, the Jamaat feels that cooperation with the secular government is a negation of Islamic government which is haram (prohibited by Islam).14

Lslam, as expounded by the Jamaat, is also opposed to democracy because sovereignty of the people and sovereignty of God do not go hand in hand. Moreover, the law making pow-er cannot be given to any human agency. The law-giver is God. The legislature at the most can enforce the Shariat which is all comprehensive. Elections, parties, majority or minority—all these concepts are alien to Islam. Democracy is viewed as a system of slavery for the minorities in India. The majority will always be tyrannical and its tyranny will make the safeguards given to the minorities meaningless. The majority and minority in India shall be religious and not political. There will be a permanent majority and a permanent minority. And

p. 34.

11. A. L. Islahi: Bharat Ki Nai Tameer.

12. Compare Maudoodi: 'I will certainly

have no objection to it (Hindu State) if in that system Muslims are treated like Malechas and Shudras, if the laws

of Manu are applied to them and if

they are not given either a share in the government or rights of citizenship.' Report of Inquiry Commission. p. 244)

^{9.} A. L. Islahi: Bharat Ki Nai Tameer p. 19.

^{10.} A. L. aur Musalman ane Hind. Rampur. 2nd edition. 1952, p. 17.

aur Hum. Delhi, 4th edition. 1967.

^{13.} A. L. Islahi: Masla-e-Intekhabat... p. 35. Islahi: Masla-e-Intekhabat

^{14.} Rudad-e-Jamaat-e-Islami. Part IV. Rampur 1952. pp. 146-147.

^{6.} Ibid., p. 5

^{7.} Introducing the Jamaat-e-Islami (Hind). Rampur, 1959, pp. 11-12.

^{8.} Rudad-e-Ijtema-e-Rampur. Rampur, 2nd edition, 1959. pp. 81-83.

the claim about the rule of the people is dubbed as a fraud, a hoax

The Jamaat feels that democracy will create a slavish mentality among the Muslims implying their de-Islamization. Besides, Islam and democracy are poles apart. Democracy maintains equality of sexes, to which Islam is opposed. Islam holds that women are not fit to wield power and the Zimmis (protected non-Muslims) in an Islamic State cannot enjoy the rights enjoyed by the Muslims. The key posts in the Islamic State are held by the Muslims.

It is accepted even by the leaders of the Jamaat that the goal of the Islamic State is a distant goal. Under the present ungodly government, a true Muslim should relinquish any key post which he or she holds, or the membership of its legislature or the office for deciding cases under its judicial system. He or she should sever contacts of intimacy and cooperation, but not the general human relations, with transgressors as well as iniquitous and God-neglecting people. 15

But, who are the true Muslims. The Jamaat does not consider all Muslims as genuine Muslims. The Jamaat is 'a close body of like-minded' people consisting of a particular segment of the Muslim community. That is why a Muslim of Brelvi, Qadiami, ahle-e-Quavan, Deobandi persuasion or a Shia is excluded unless he renounces his beliefs and gives positive practical demonstration thereof.16 The ordinary Muslims are regarded as unchaste and 'deviants from the path of righteousness'. But the Jamaat exploits their problems as a matter of political strategy.

The Jamaat lays stress on the three principles to be followed by the Muslims in independent India: (i) solidarity of the Muslims on the basis of Islam; (ii) withdrawal from the political activities in the country; and (iii) a separate organization of the Muslims. The Jamaat feels that unity based on the Quran and Sunnah can be stable and permanent. Such a unity would make the community strong enough to fight the enemies of God from within and from without. In the absence of the spirit of godliness no concrete Islamic programme could be chalked out. The solidarity and unity of the Muslims would constitute a force against the present system which denies the existence of God, life after death and the prophethood of Mohammad.

The Jamaat regards the solidarity of Muslims as the logical outcome of the spirit of Islam. Its objective is the establishment of Deen. This would unite religion and politics. It is instructive to note that the Jamaat does not compromise with any organization unless it is sure of its dominant position. In 1950. Z. H. Lari called a Muslim conference at Lucknow and appealed to the Jamaat along with other organizations to work together for protecting the interests of the Muslims. Jamaat refused on the ground that not all the organizations invited to the conference accepted the fundamental viewpoint of Islam. A. L. Islahi's fear was that the Muslims' making common cause with spell other parties would disorganization and disaster.17

A nother significant aspect of the Jamaat's policy is the non-participation of the Muslims in the elections. This stems from the so-called Islamic ideology and the need for the consolidation of the Muslims as a party to enforce the Shariat. According to Jamaat philosophy, sovereignty is the attribute of God

and hence the supremacy of the legislature is un-Islamic. If the Muslims contest the elections and participate in the law making process, they would be indulging in un-Islamic activity. Not only the elections, but the entire system is the imitation of 'the Godless West'. Involvement in the election may be responsible for the loss of Islamic identity for the Muslims.

Besides, A. L. Islahi envisages some practical difficulties in India. The Muslim candidates would not be able to secure the votes of the Hindus. The alternative for them is to enter into alliances with other political parties. But this is not possible because every Indian party believes in the 'One Nation Theory'.18 Furthermore. would disable the Muslims as protectors of the legitimate interests of the whole community. Following the discipline of a political party, the Muslims would cease to be the masters of their own will. One need not be surprised at A. L. Islahi's approval of Maulana Hamidul Ansari Ghazi's fallacious argument that the Hindus want to establish a State in keeping with the Vedas and the Dharmasastras and that they want to emerge as a Hindu nation.19

Une of the short term objectives of the Jamaat is the establishment of a separate political organization for the Muslims. By forbidding them from joining any party or cooperating with the government, the Jamaat does not want to convert them into an inactive group. On the contrary, the Jamaat expects them to be strong and active. After achieving a position of strength it plans to participate in the elections and use them as a forum to realize its object of establishing Deen. Non-participation in the electoral process is a policy, not a creed. A change will be effected if it is strong enough to maintain the religious

^{15.} The Constitution of the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind. pp. 7-8.

Cf. Ayesha Batt: Jamaat-e-Islami and communalism. Secular Democracy. August 1970. pp. 29—30.

^{17.} A. L. Islahi: Masla-e-Intekhabat.

^{18.} Ibid., p. 22.

^{19.} Ibid., p. 79.

features of the community and preach Islam to the non-Muslims. The Jamaat acted with calculated strategy and achieved the desired results.

The Jamaat knew fully well that the nationalist leadership, even after the partition of the country, would not be accepted by the Muslim community. Although this leadership was the only link between the Muslims and the government, yet the community was not prepared to give up its insistence on maintaining its separatist Islamic character. The Muslims were still reluctant to merge their individuality into the Indian nation. The Jamaat was also aware of another school of thought which believed in Muslim nationalism. This type of leadership thought in terms of 'safeguards', 'protection' and 'spoils'. The Jamaat has been confident that Indian democracy cannot afford to assign an autonomous status to the minorities. This leadership was, therefore, doomed to failure. The Jamaat offered the alternative of religious politics wherein lies their salvation.

The Jamaat claims that its appeal is to all the people irrespective of their religion and creed. But this is far from true. It is wholly manned by Muslims. As regards building a stable social structure, it addresses itself particularly to the Muslims.20 It reminds them that they are the heirs to a religious tradition 'that had been preserved in its pristine purity, and which had been put to exhaustive test in history. Their present political involvement was not only a distant cry from their lofty religious ideal, but would lead them into the mire of moral turpitude and further and further away from the true mission of a dedicated society.'21 There is an inherent superiority of the Muslims over the other

'Is the Hindu of today prepared to accept that the Hindus and the Muslims are as one nation, then it is useless to search for a solution.'22 This is obviously a two nation theory. Maudoodi preached the same before inde-The Jamaat still pendence. seems to subscribe to Maudoodi's view that the differences between the Hindus and Muslims are deep rooted. There are wide gulfs between their systems of There is little unity morals. between the sources of tradition. Emotions and sentiments are mutually repulsive and antagonistic. Maulana Maudoodi thus provided an ideological content and justification for the two nation theory.

The Jamaat feels that joint organizations of the communities would be of no help in promoting communal amity. If we want to have communal harmony in India 'there should be separate and strong organizations of the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Buddhists and others. None should try to wean away the members of one another. Hindu Muslim unity cannot be achieved by setting up joint organizations of the two religious communities. religious Every community should have a separate political organization and every issue should be decided by the leaders of the representatives of the communities by holding mutual talks.'23 Such an approach is bound to encourage separatism in the religious communities.

National integration and united nationhood will remain a pious hope if such organizations are allowed to function. But the Jamaat still aspires to create a Muslim society within a State.

The Jamaat's approach and interpretation of Islam is surcharged with orthodoxy and fanaticism. The Jamaat is not prepared to accept that Islam is a product of a society essentially tribal in character. The process of the development and the structural changes in the society have made most of the sociopolitical features of Islam irrelevant.²⁴ Hence, the claim that Islam is still all comprehensive necessarily encourages reactionary politics and outdated political ideas.

According to the Jamaat, Islam is not a 'religion' but a movement which, by determining the relationship between man and man, aims at the establishment of a 'World State'. The idea of the Rule of God and His sovereignty is essentially in line with the medieval traditions. The Jamaat does not show any awareness of the changed social realities. Consequently, Islam becomes a political religion and comes in the way 'to change from autocratic to more democratic and secular patterns of political organization and social beliefs'.²⁵

The Jamaat's approach is the complete negation of the liberal interpretation of Islam offered by Sir Syed, Ameer Ali or Azad. Unlike the liberal interpreters, the Jamaat does not make any distinction between the spirit of religion and its outward form. Therefore, it cannot accept the principle of the unity of all religions. It strongly advocates the superiority of Islam and regards its followers as superior to all other people. In a multi-reli-

groups which is asserted to maintain the exclusive character of the Muslims and avoid any meaningful cultural and political unity with them. Its stand on the Hindu-Muslim question is significant: the Hindus and the Muslims are in reality two separate social structures, standard-bearers of two separate cultures and are separate entities.

^{22.} Dawat, 25 June, 1970.

^{23.} Marg Deep (Marathi, now defunct) December 26, 1964.

^{24.} Max Weber: Sociology of Religion. London. 1965. p. 264.

Clifford Greetz (editor): Old Societies and New States. New Delhi. 1971 p. 59.

^{20.} Introducing the Jamaat-e-Islami (Hind). p. 4.

^{21.} Ibid., p. 4.

gious society it certainly creates obstacles in the way of the ideal of human equality.

The Jamaat is rigidly organized and is a well disciplined party. Although it is essentially composed of the middle class, lately it has made a successful bid to gain the support of all the sections of the Muslims. Presently, it exercises tremendous influence, which should not be judged by its membership (the strength of the Jamaat members is 1500). The factor responsible for the increasing popularity of the Jamaat is that it provides emotional security to a demoralised and riot-affected community. It has succeeded in winning over a large segment of the community to the point that the solution of all the problems including communal violence lies in the unity of the Muslims. This success means the broadening of its political base and a stronger bargaining position with any party in power as a result of Muslim consolidation.

The Jamaat's hold on the Muslim mind should be viewed with grave concern. It is giving birth to a strong combination of Islamic orthodoxy, political irrationalism, emotionalism and an uncompromising hostility to the modern civilization. Religious intolerance fosters religious antagonism and social aloofness and political separatism. Muslim solidarity, exclusiveness of the community, obscurantism and separatist politics²⁶ are the manifestations of the closed character of the Jamaat.27 In fact, it represents 'the old school of ignorant repressive religionists' characterized by the absence of an open mind, lack of historical sense, insufficient recognition of the variety and complexity social facts and a pronounced reactionary and fanatical outlook.

Anand marg

N. K. SINGH

IN the graveyard of secret societies there stands a beautiful tombstone, perhaps an imported one, with the following inscription: Anand Marg—birth 1955; death 1971.

The CBI inquiry into Anand Marg affairs, resulting in many shocking revelations, and the consequential desertion by a number of Marg followers including some top ranking officials, has virtually liquidated this so-called 'socio-spiritual and religious' organisation which was founded by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, a former employee of the Jamalpur Railway workshop on January 9, 1955. At that time, nobody could imagine that in less than 15 years the organisation, founded in a small. quarter of Jamalpur railway

^{26.} See Moin Shakir: Communal politics of the Jamaat-e-Islami (Hind). 'Secular Democracy', April, 1970.

See Moin Shakir: Theory and Practice of the Jamaat-e-Islami (Hind). Delhi. 1970.

colony (Bihar), would grow to such dimensions and invite such controversy.

P. R. Sarkar, alias Anand Murti, who is described as 'the great Preceptor, the Harbinger of A New Civilization and the Loving Guru' by his faithful followers, was born on April 13, 1921, in a Bihar-based Bengali family of Jamalpur. Marg followers believe that Anand Murti, who is generally referred to as 'Baba' in Marg circles, is the third incarnation of God, the earlier two being Shiva and Krishna.

Literally speaking, Anand Marg means the path to eternal According to Anand Murti, his philosophy teaches man to abandon the pursuit of material, finite happiness, and leads him to the path of 'everlasting bliss'. The main aim of the Marg is to establish a Sadavipra Samaj-a society of intellectual moralists. To an Anand Margi, the human body is like an empty pot and one should not hesitate to sacrifice life for the sake of one's faith, i.e., Anand Marg. Through simple Yogic meditation according to the rules and procedures laid down by the 'Baba', one could join the 'Cosmos' in no time.

o far so good, but however, a deeper study into the Marg literature throws light upon the black side of this so-called philosophy. The 'simple yogic meditation' as prescribed by Anand Murti is nothing but *Tantrik* puja. Although it is an established fact that the Tantrics and Aghoris have never received social recognition and prestige in India, P. R. Sarkar says: 'Although the superficial form of modern Indian culture seems to be Vedic, its basic content is even to-day Tantric. If the Indian culture is like a golden ornament, the Tantrics are the gold (P. R. Sarkar, Abhimat, p. 133).

Naturally, this pseudo-sanyasi has no regard for democracy,

which according to him is 'the government of the fools, by the fools and for the fools'. And hence 'the illiterates or the illeducated persons should reasonably be kept deprived of their franchise'. (P. R. Sarkar, Problems of the Day, p. 52). Anand Murti thinks that 'an enlightened people's welfare type dictatorship or a moralist or spiritual dictatorship' is the only way out. (P. R. Sarkar, Abhimat, p. 160). In the same book he elaborates the point: 'the society belongs to all but its leadership will be in the hands of only Sadavipras -persons who've gained self control by means of spiritual practices and are aspirants of cosmic consciousness'. (p. 55). However, the Proutist Block of India, the political wing of Anand Marg, made no secret of its desires and without any pretext of high sounding jargon, it declared that the sole aim of the PBI was 'to establish the dictatorship of Baba'.

A nand Marg, the executor of this dangerous philosophy, made rapid progress within just a few years of its emergence. Its followers could be found in all walks of life including doctors, teachers, professors, students, government servants, armymen, policemen and last but not the least, politicians. To-day, the Marg claims to have nearly five million activists and over 1000 avdhuts—whole-time paid paramilitary workers of the organisation. It has 2000 branches all over India and abroad where it claims to have nearly one lakh supporters.

The Marg has an ultra-modern and well-equipped organisational set-up. For instance, it employs a public relations secretary, education secretary, relief secretary, publications secretary and so on. It has its own political, student, labour and cultural wings, which remain under the firm grip of 'Baba'. For organisational purposes, the Marg has divided the world into nine sectors: Berlin, Eastern

Europe, Hongkong, London, Manila, Nairobi, New Delhi, New York and Sydney.

The main body of the Marg is called the Anand Marg Pracharak Sangh. P. R. Sarkar is himself the President of the AMPS, while one Acharya Sarveshwaranand Avdhut is the General Secretary. Shashi Ranjan Sahu, a former MP, who resigned from the Congress to form the Proutist Block of India, the political wing of the Marg, is another secretary.

The AMPS has a number of affiliated bodies like the Proutist Federation of India, the propaganda wing, Renaissance Artists and Writers Association, the cultural wing, and the Education Relief and Welfare Section of the Anand Marg. With many sub branches like the Tribal Welfare Section and Women's Welfare Section, ERAWS founded in 1967 is the most active of all.

The first and foremost aim of the Proutist Block of India, the political wing of the Marg, is to 'check the growth of commu-nism'. Perhaps it was only with a view to counter the growth of the Naxalite poster-jungle that the PBI launched its massive poster-campaign about one year back. The Naxalites paid them back in their own coin by hurling bombs on their National Convention held at Patna in December 1970. The Proutists (PROUT has been derived from Progressive Utilization Theory propagated by Anand Murti) have no representation either in the Parliament or in any of the State assemblies. They entered the electoral field for the first time in the 1967, General Election and since then they have been contesting elections on the significantly fascist symbol of the Swastika.

The Universal Proutist Students Federation, the student wing of Marg, set up shop very recently in 1970. It is doubtful whether it has any existence in any State except in Bihar unless of course, in the 'Universe'?

The labour wing of the Anand Marg too boasts of being 'Universal'. The Universal Proutist Labour Federation is registered as a trade union by the Delhi Administration. Acharya Krishnanand Avdhut is the Chief Secretary and R. P. Upadhyay, a visiting lecturer and an associate of the Asian Trade Union Congress, Bangkok, set up under the aegis of the US-sponsored International Confederation of Free Trade Union Congress, is the second man. For some time the UPLF has been busy spreading its activities in the industrial belt of Chotanagour.

All the above mentioned organisations are controlled, and in frequent cases even headed, by the avdhuts, the whole time paid workers of the Anand Marg Pracharak Sangh. These avdhuts are recruited after full scrutiny and constant observation, the probationary period being for rather a long period. Even after it, the candidate is allowed to join only as a Sadhak -the lowest post in the organisation. There are five ranks of Anand Margi sadhus: Sadhak, Tantrik, Acharya, Avdhut and Purodha, the first being the lowest and the last being the highest post. An Anand Margi sadhu wears a saffron uniform and keeps a big dagger tied around his waist.

Dharmachakras, some sort of weekly gatherings, are organised on every Sunday and it is a 'must' for every Sanyasi to attend them. It is understood that these dharmachakras facilitate the assembling of whole-timers for 'important discussions'. On a much larger scale, the annual congregations called dharma mahachakra are organised, in which only selected persons are allowed to participate.

Who are the Marg followers? They may be doctors, professors,

civil servants, politicians or the so-called elites of our society. But they also reflect the semifeudal psychological set-up of our society—the average superstitious Indian who has the body of the 20th century but the mind of the 18th century.

According to the Anand Marg followers, when Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, who was called Arun in his childhood days, was born, his grandmother was asked to bring some cow's milk for the newly born child. The milk was brought and, lo!, infant Arun took the glass in his tiny hands and started drinking! There was a jungle near Jamalpur. One day a batch of hunters called at Laxmi Narayan Sarkar's, Arun's father. They had seen his son in the jungle riding on a lion's back. Arun did not know how to read or write Bengali, his mother-tongue. And once his sister teased him for it. What Arun did was simply to pick up a copy and in a matter of seconds was writing his name not only in Bengali, but in Arabic, Roman and Devanagri as well.

Many such stories are widespread in Marg circles. About the younger son of Anand Murti, Gautam, it is said that he is an incarnation of the Buddha. Similarly, about one avdhut it is said that he was Vivekananda in his previous birth. Others are identified as Bhismapitamah, Arjun, Dronacharya and so on.

To keep such queer propaganda alive, a number of magazines and three dailies are brought out by the Marg, all over India. The organisation owns a chain of printing-presses which pour out tonnes of propaganda literature in English and the vernaculars.

And, Marg's style of working is very interesting. This 'socio-spiritual and religious' organisation harps on the need for secrecy and shadow fighting. Its followers live in a state of tension and hysteria, always

anticipating confrontation with the enemy-who-is-nowhere. So much secrecy clouds the working methods of the Marg that except for his own assigned work, an avdhut has no information about others or other matters. The names of avdhuts are changed at the time of their entry into the organisation, for which the pretext of the wellknown rule of Hindu sanyas, that a sanyasi forsakes and forgets his path and takes a new birth under a new name, is taken. (Ironically enough, it is said that the Anand Marg chief has violated all the rules of sanyas by marrying and producing a score of children). This phenomenon is creating a lot of hindrance in the way of law and order. It becomes practically impossible for the executive or judiciary to proceed in any case when the Margis refuse to disclose their past identities.

Significantly enough, the Marg changes or always chooses its office premises and residential quarters outside the town-be it Purulia, Ranchi, Patna, Calcutta, Delhi or Varanasi. In these wellguarded premises, entry is strictly prohibited. No. 160, strictly prohibited. Patliputra Colony, the Patna situated headquarters of Marg is a living example of Marg secrecy. As for 'Baba' Anand Murti, his public appearances are rare and even the high-ranking sanyasis called Purodhas cannot meet him easily. Wherever Anand Murti goes, he is always escorted by armed bodyguards. Even his ordinary chelas are very cautious in their movements. No avdhut is seen staying in the town any longer than his work requires. Conferences and meetings, contrary to the spirit of any religious organisation, have always been kept a closely guarded secret.

Overtly, the Anand Marg members are seen engaged in organising schools and relief works for those in distress. Butthese seemingly philanthropic works are not without some gain. While the educational institutions help the Marg to get a number of devoted followers, the relief work it is said serves as a cover for the 'investment' of a large sum of money which the organisation is suspected to be receiving from 'unknown' quarters.

 \mathbf{T}_{he} The Education Relief and Welfare Section of the Anand Marg runs about 200 educational institutions which include some secondary schools and one college. These schools serve a double purpose: mixing among the masses with the image of 'social workers' as well as recruiting immature children as raw-material. Like the Nazis. the Anand Marg too prefers children rather than grown-ups as raw-material. All the teachers of these schools, nay brainwashing centres, are dedicated avdhuts who must first undergo rigorous and thorough training themselves because, as a Russian chela of Anand Murti, Dal Brozosky put it, 'destitute or orphan children unless they are given proper education and training are unable to develop properly'. However, the mean-ing of 'proper education and training,' has been exposed by the 'great Preceptor' himself. 'No 'ism' except universalism can be tolerated in the educational system. . . Sense of reverence, devotion as well as that of discipline will fascinate them and very easily they will acquire the abilities of becoming Sadavipras'. (P. R. Sarkar, Problems of the Day, p. 53). And one knows very well what he means by Sadavipras?

Under a well-calculated strategy, the innocent kids are asked to worship the 'Baba' as God. Thousands of orphans and poor boys living in the Marg ashrams—most of whom come in contact with the Marg during its 'relief' operations to 'help' the victims of natural catastrophies such as famine, flood, earthquake or cyclone—

are expected to address Anand Murti as their father. Are not creatures living on the earth, sons and daughters of 'Baba'? Gradually these small children convert into staunch supporters of the Marg and quite a few of them join as archuts. What a cynical exploitation of human misery!

The Anand Marg has succeeded in recruiting a number of followers from the administrative, military and police forces, particularly the latter. This helps the Marg to pursue its activities with greater freedom. For example, some IAS and police officers were seen at Ranchi during the annual congregation of the Marg held in May, 1971, and one IAS officer even addressed a press conference held in this connection. It is said that many army personnel have fled from the services and joined the Anand Marg and these deserters are now used by the organisation for giving military training to the avdhuts.

Last but not the least, it has been alleged that the Anand Marg has communal leanings. A leaflet brought out by the Marg, following the well known clash between the Marg followers and and the adivasis of Purulia, tried to give the incident a communal colour. Instead of a statement that a clash took place between its followers and the local people, the leaflet called it a 'murder committed by the Muslim goondas'. And, within one week of the distribution of the leaflets, beef was found in a Hindu temple of Jamalpur where the Marg had its genesis.

Such multi-dimensional activities as pursued by the Marg certainly need a substantial amount of money. But the organisation's channels of income also remain a mystery. Although the organisation is a registered one, the Registrar is seldom provided with its bal-

ance-sheet. Earlier, there was no obvious source for the Marg's funds. Recently, in order to satisfy the tax authorities, it has started some sort of 'donation', schemes'.

T rouble seems to erupt wherever the Marg pitches its tent. It had to shift from Purulia to Ranchi some years back following a serious clash with the local adivasis in 1965 in which about half a dozen 'sadhus' were killed. At that time too, many nasty allegations were made against the Marg and its members. Later, the West Bengal Government instituted an inquiry by a Divisional Commissioner, who in his report. scathingly castigated the Marg and its ways.

In Ranchi, too, the Anand Marg clashed with the local people in May 1971. The clash took place during the 5-day dharma mahachakra (annual congregation) celebrated by the organisation on the 50th birthday of Anand Murti. A number of cases and countercases were registered with the local police in this connection. Later in June the arrest of an avdhut who was in the illegal possession of a fire-arm, led to the raid on Marg headquarters and the alleged recovery of three rifles, one revolver, large quantities of cartridges, bombs, bomb-manufacturing materials and spears besides five human skulls and some blood stained daggers. In all, 34 persons including Anand Murti were taken into custody.

Following the Ranchi episode, the Anand Marg members and followers all over the country started an agitation for the withdrawal of all 'false' charges and cases against Anand Murti and Anand Margis. Several press conferences were held to represent the Marg's side of the case. The public relations secretary of the AMPS alleged that 'the Government of India had a hand in

the arrest of Guru Anand Murtijee'.

On the request of the Bihar government, the CBI started an inquiry into the Anand Marg affair. The Marg resented this and demanded a judicial inquiry. The Marg's sudden love for the judiciary is significant in the context of the dozens of cases of murder, kidnapping, assault, causing obstruction to public servants on duty, etc., pending against it in the various courts of India. A judicial inquiry into the Marg affairs means the scrapping of the official inquiry being conducted by the CBI which will ultimately result in the dropping of many cases. Moreover, a judicial inquiry is a lengthy process and the timegap may help the Marg in washing away the evidence with the help of its enthusiastic followers in the top echelons of the bureaucratic hierarchy.

The CBI, in the course of its investigation, had made a number of shocking revelations. The documents seized by the CBI during its simultaneously organised raids on Anand Marg establishments at Patna, Cal-cutta, Delhi and Varanasi in October last revealed that the organisation has been running a parallel 'government' with departments like education, social welfare, finance, etc. This 'government' has its own 'judiciary'. Both the 'executive' and 'judiciary' are headed by P. R. Sarkar who enjoys veto powers; the other 'ministers' of the 'cabinet' or the other 'judges' of the 'court' can only give suggestions to the Chief, but cannot take any decision themselves.

This 'court', it is said, can give any sort of punishment ranging from caning to the death sentence. Disloyalty to the organisation is considered a major offence and such persons are awarded capital punishment by Anand Murti who, it is alleged, usually orders, 'shoot at sight'.

And shot at sight were, perhaps, 50 former Anand Margis who are traceless.

The para-military wing of the Marg, the Volunteer Social Service, is believed to serve as the execution squad of the outfit. Apparently, the V.S.S. had a very brutal modus operandi: comrades-in-arms were persuaded to take a walk in Chotanagpur jungle where their abdomens were ripped open, genitals chopped off, eyes taken out and faces disfigured. It is reported that one Madhvanand Avdhut, 'Commander-in-Chief' of the V.S.S., now under police custody has said in a closed-door confession before a first class magistrate that he himself executed eleven avdhuts at the orders of Anand Murti.

Anand Murti, the 'chief judge', used to penalise avdhuts with a heavy hand for every little act of omission and commission. Partly to keep them in terror and partly in the belief that only in this way could he fulfil his dreams, he'imparted the most brutal and primitive punish-The ex-avdhuts narrate ment. in unbelievable terms how they used to take up to five hundred canings at a time and pass urine and stools in their clothes. There are instances of solitary confinement and regular beatings for days together.

According to the CBI, the Anand Marg had conspired to assassinate Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, too. It may be recalled that in September, 1969, about half a dozen 'sadhus' of the Marg were arrested in Varanasi for an alleged plot on the life of Mrs Gandhi. The cases could not be proceeded with for lack of concrete information at that time. However, the recent episodes have shed some light on the assassination plot thereby compelling the CBI to reopen investigations.

The documents seized by the CBI also revealed that the Marg

had been receiving regular donations from some people in the country as well as from outside. The search of the residence of P. R. Sarkar also led to the recovery of Rs. 86,233 in currency notes, which has been seized by the income-tax authorities. A sum of Rs. 13,000 was also recovered from the house of Shashi Ranjan Sahu, the Secretary of Anand Marg.

The episode, particularly the CBI revelations, shattered the Anand Marg, which finally cracked up with Anand Murti's wife, Mrs Uma Sarkar's desertion from the organisation in October last along with several top-ranking avdhuts and avdhutikas such as Avdhut Vishokanand, the former P.A. to Anand Murti, Ironically, Mrs. Sarkar, before she took up cudgels against Anand Murti, was the 'Marg Mata', the only other person to command as much respect and authority as Anand Murti himself. and Avdhut Vishokanand was the left-hand man of 'Baba'.

In an eye-popping statement, these ex-avdhuts and avdhuti-kas have alleged that Anand Murti is 'the murderer of scores of avdhut sanyasis and an incorrigible practitioner of homosexual intercourse with his own disciples after having convinced them of their girlhood in previous lives'. According to Mrs Sarkar, there is a widespread practice of homosexuality in the highest echelons of the Marg.

Subsequently, Anand Murti, who had earlier been released on bail from the Ranchi case, was arrested at Patna on December 29 last by the Bihar Police at the instance of the CBI, under Section 302 (murder) and 120B (conspiracy to commit murder).

The Anand Marg is anything but what it claims to be.

Shiv sena

K. K. GANGADHARAN

THE Shiv Sena is a typical bossist organisation, mainly confined to Bombay city and the neighbouring towns. Its ideological appeal is Maharashtrian chauvinism. But the existential basis which it exploits is mostly urban chaos and the suffering of the masses. Thriving upon a regional frame of mind, it adopts `a variety of tactics including mass propaganda, gangsterism, religio-politics and strike breaking, besides social service and business. The phenomenal growth of the Shiv Sena found-The ed by a one time nonentity and second-rate cartoonist, Thackeray, has puzzled people all over India. The fact that it could hold the city of Bombay to ransom at will many times during the last five years of its existence, and drive terror into the hearts of literally millions of people in the region, speaks volumes for its methods of violence and intimidation. It is difficult to understand this phenomenon unless one studies the historical background which enable the regional Shiv Sena to weild such a tight grip over the most advanced and conspicuously cosmopolitan city of Bombay.

The post-independence period all over India was a stage of reawakening and invocation of the regional cultures. In the case of Maharashtra, it had its own Shivaji cult, and a profusion of

myths and legends centering around the Chhatrapati Maharaj. The fact that Maharashtra was an empire, not too long ago, adds an entirely new dimension to this. When, at the first instance, Maharashtra was not given the status of a linguistic State as others were, the Samyukta Maharashtra movement began. Conducted in an emotionally surcharged atmosphere, with the aid of legends and stereotypes, the campaign for Maharashtra State had farreaching psychological implications.

As Dilip Chitre put it 'the spirit of Shivaji was invoked to fight the persecutors in Delhi. Nehru signified a new Mughale-Azam and Morarji Desai his commander in Maharashtra.' 'It led to the creation of languagebased chauvinism. It revived memories of Maratha nationalism and a complex of other historical myths quite irrelevant today. It triggered a latent atavistic tendency in the Marathi man. It also created a mass paranoia. All the Maharashtrians began to suffer from delusions of grandeur and an acute persecution mania which are the chief symptoms of paranoia. They felt they were being per-secuted by the Central Govern-ment with the help of people speaking other languages. . . . Morarji Desai, who was at that time the Chief Minister of the

State of Bombay, was probably the most hated man in Maharashtra... Mr. Desai was viewed as an alien... he was a Gujarati—a major dimension, at least in the average Marathi speaking man's mind, of his bad image."

A fter the establishment of the present Maharashtra, the furtherance and consolidation of this trend continued. Today, a giant size majestic statue of Shivaji on horseback stands at the Gateway of India. Significantly enough, there is no such statue of Mahatma Gandhi anywhere in the city. The famous Flora Fountain has become Hutatma Chowk and the martyrs' memorial there is of the heroes who fought for Samyukta Maharashtra. Continuous agitation for the inclusion of Vidharba and Goa in the past, or Belgaum at present, goes on, making the people conscious of territory.

Added to this, there is the Shivaji cult in literature, drama and even journalism. The tremendous success and popularity of Vasant Kanekar's play dealing with Shivaji and his son, Sambhaji, Ranjit Desai's novel set in the period of the Peshwas, Y. D. Pendharkar's recent epic on Shivaji's life are all to the point. It is also said that B. M. Purandara, who is a biographer of Shivaji, draws an audience of thousands to his lectures on Shivaji. Shivaji also finds his place regularly in Marathi newspapers like the late P. K. Atre's Maratha daily.2 Obviously, such intellectual products are highly admired; this indicates the nature of aspirations, meaning and values cherished by Marathi readers or audiences.

'The renewed use of this symbol and its vigorous popularization during critical times facing the community only helps

to repair and renovate the symbolic content, further vesting it with new dimensions of contemporary aspirations and hatred. In this process, what Shivaji originally was is hardly relevant, but what the symbol has become today in relation to the social dynamics of the country in general and Maharashtra in particular is important. Shivaji is painted and repainted according to one's own imagination and interest to the extent that he becomes a destroyer of mosques and killer of butchers who take cows to slaughter houses.

During the days of the national movement, if a Hindu God like Ganesh could easily become a Congressman, don Gandhi cap and spearhead huge processions through the crowded streets of Bombay, then one may ask, why cannot 'Shivaji' join hands with the RSS, the Jana Sangh or the Shiv Sena itself? In fact, when Tilak founded the Ganapati festival and started the Shivaji Mela in the old style, the politicalization of religion had begun. What followed was in his footprints.

Those who were socialized in this regional cultural background and upon the slogan of Mumbai amcha ahe (Bombay is ours) cannot but develop the chauvinistic outlook eminent in the situation. The perspective thus developed and the reality which comes through in Bombay city are irreconcilably contradictory. In spite of the slogan Mumbai amcha ahe, the Maharashtrian finds that Bombay city is hardly his. The palatial mansions, the newly built skyscrapers, the unending streams of motor cars and giant factories are mostly owned by non-Maharashtrians who are in a majority in the city.

There are more material and social conditions which, if wrongly understood, can constitute a predisposition to a parochial outlook and demands. This concerns the growth of Bombay city as the major centre of

India's foreign trade, commerce and industry. As in other places, in Bombay city also there is a certain degree of occupational specialization among the linguistic, caste or even religious groups. The Gujaratis are in commerce, trade and industry; people of Uttar Pradesh in the milk trade; the Punjabis in the spare parts and the taxi trades; the South Indians in white collar professions; the people of Udipi (Karnatak) and Iranis in the hotel and restaurant business; the Sindhis in the building trade; the Andhraite Kamatis in construction work and so on. The list may be multiplied. These occupational patterns are a matter of historical development of professions and trade in the city, and not anyone's deliberate creation. But, in the prevailing situation regional minds in search of scapegoats can be persuaded to see conspiracy on the part of others against the local people.

Similarly, take the ever increasing unemployment and the unending influx of people from all over India. The result was the widespread growth of slums, and people without even slum facilities, sleeping in thousands on the footpaths. This led to a co-existence of palatial mansions and pavement dwellers. Thus, the city presents a great urban chaos. Unemployment, beggary, poverty, lack of accommodation, scarcity of amenities of day-to-day life including non-availability of drinking water are the plight of thousands of people. There is stiff and heartless competition everywhere. Anonymity, insecurity and a sense of anxiety looms large in the minds of people.

Conditions are such that the people living in this 'concrete jungle' become amenable to all sorts of suggestions and propaganda at the unscrupulous hands of magicians, spiritualists, yogis, babas and politicians. In the context of regionalism, the city becomes extremely pliable for sowing the seeds of scapegoat-

^{1.} Dilip Chitre, 'Rise of the Third Shivaji', The Hindustan Times, 28. 2. 1969.

^{2.} Ibid.,

ism and spreading hatred against the national population which now takes the stamp of 'aliens' as against the 'local men'. Regional and revivalist symbols like Shivaji are easily manipulated to convey any message the propagandist desires.

Under the circumstances, the educated become ignorant, the mass media of enlightenment become the vehicle of stark superstition, class consciousness is easily, and at least temporarily, over-ridden to create a 'false consciousness' of regional affinity. In the existing pattern of regionalism in India, and in particular in the areas under the influence of the Shiv Sena in Bombay city and the adjoining towns—in spite of their industrial advancement and urban setting-it appears to be not the class basis but the ethnocentric stimulus that enables the people to perceive and understand the situations as they do. Regionalism becomes a major frame of reference in the thinking process of the people.

What became of the symbol of Shivaji when it was manipulated in the present day context of linguistic regionalism and Bombay city's cosmopolitan industrialism is most interesting. Shivaji has been adopted by the RSS and the Jana Sangh as a symbol of Hindu nationalism. They celebrate the coronation of Shivaji as the Hindu Empire Day celebration. Here the symbecomes national—even though it is narrow Hindu nationalism. The same symbol in the minds of Maharashtrians is something else. 'Shivaji symbolizes the rise of Maratha power. His success story is the story, to the Marathi man, of the leader of the underdog who defied a mighty empire and laid the foundation of the greatest military power in India for some time.'3

In this regional view Shivaji stands for two things, the fight

of the underdog and a conqueror who built up an empire. While the symbolism of the underdog is purposeful and relevant today, in the case of Shivaji it is impossible to separate the conqueror in him from the representative of the underdog. The propagation of this symbol in a democratic quasi-federal republic of India has indeed 'chilling implications'. It may mean the promotion of an empire mentality in one of the States of the federal republic of India. Moreover, the symbolism of the underdog lost its value when the Shiv Sena became a group of blacklegs and strike-breakers leading to perpetual bickerings among the Maharashtrian underdog, not to speak of others.

Shivaji, as he has been symbolized, prior to the terrible riots of May 1970 in Bhiwandi, is clearly indicated in the following accounts given in 'The Times of India': 'Shortly after Shiv Jayanti (1969) a new organization appeared in Bhiwandi headed by two well-known local Jana Sangh and RSS leaders. It was called the Rashtriya Utsav Mandal. The Rashtriya Utsav Mandal began by putting up a huge board outside its office in the centre of town. On this it highlighted news items calculated to inflame Hindu communal sentiments...'

'The Rashtriya Utsav Mandal also went out of its way to interfere with the Muharram procession in March this year (1970). Against express police instructions, huge fires of pits were dug for the Holi festival, at two places directly in the path of the Muslim procession. Huge bonfires were lit in these pits on the day of the Muharram procession (March 18) at the precise moment of the Tazia procession, effectively blocking its path. But Holi was still three days away!'

'Shiv Jayanti celebrations opened on May 5 ... Among the

speakers officially invited by the programmes committee was a well-known RSS leader from Dombivli ... Hindu and Muslim members of the peace committee warned him of the tense situation in the town and requested him to keep his speech moderate.' But, he went on to tell the audience that Shivaji's policy had been one of respecting mosques except when they were being used as centres of anti-State activities. In Bhiwandi he got one mosque pulled down for this reason. He implied that Shivaji's task remained incomplete. On the night of the 6th, the programme included a play whose theme was the ill-treat-ment of kidnapped Hindu girls by a Mughal Chieftain in his harem."

Now, this is how Shivaji was symbolized during the Shiv Jayanti celebrations. According to Indian practice, the birth celebrations of great men are solemn occasions when at least momentarily people display a mode of conduct befitting the nature and quality of such heroes. So, how does Shiv Jayanti depict Shivaji—as one fond of rousing communal sentiments, disturbing religious processions, destroying mosques and enjoying communal dramas!

B esides the above social context, a few references to the personal background of Bal Thackeray would throw some light on the Shiv Sena leadership. 'Thackeray was a cartoonist in the "Free Press Journal" of Bombay, which like most English newspapers has a large number of South Indians on its staff. Like cartoonists all over the world, he clashed with news editors and sub-editors over the quality of his cartoons. Unfortunately, Thackeray, being just average came to the conclusion that there was antipathy to him only because he was not a South Indian. That such clashes take

^{3.} Dilip Chitre, Op. Cit.

place in Marathi newspapers also never struck him. Nor did it ever strike him that he owed his prominence as a cartoonist to a South Indian, the late Sadanand, who gave him a big boost by training him to think politically. He also overlooked the fact that the best ideas for his cartoons were not his own but were given to him by South Indian News Editors . . That in spite of such conflicts the "Free Press Journal" never employed any South Indian to keep him down was never appreciated by him.'5

'After the death of Sadanand, a number of journalists of the "Free Press Journal" resigned to start a cooperative daily. Thackeray also resigned along with them, but he soon left the daily to start his own cartoon weekly called "Marmik". His leaving had no regional undertone. His grouse against South Indians became more pronounced during this period. His weekly, a family affair, ran into difficulties in getting advertisements. Thackeray used to complain that because the agencies dominated by South Indians he was not being given advertisements. It was explained to him that this was not so. Advertisement agencies, like most organisations, operated on a commercial basis. If his paper built up a big circulation then advertisements would come in.'8 With his regional frame of reference, could Thackeray. accept this explanation? No, he could

In his desperate attempt for survival he tried many techniques. 'In the beginning he tried being anti-Muslim. He made a big play about the infamous Usha Bhargava case of Jabalpur.' As this did not click, he tried other ways such as opposing Marathi crosswords and,

finally, when he began to use a technique of propaganda which had already been used and perfected during the Samyukta Maharashtra movement, there was a dramatic change in his favour. 'Once he began to revive the paranoid feelings of his readers, his readership increased and a populist political movement began.'8 Thus, the Shiv Sena was born on June 19, 1966.

The very regional frame of reference was accentuated and exploited by the Shiv Sena in the context of the already described urban chaos of Bombay and through which the chauvinist movement was built up. It all started with the laudable idea of fighting gangsterdom in Bombay, which in the beginn-ing appealed to all. Then, Bal Thackeray launched a campaign against the bootleggers of Bombay. He claimed that 'gangland' was dominated by South Indians. Although this was mostly incorrect it could not have been particularly difficult for his Marathi readers and listeners to believe. He raised a question: why should 'gangland' be dominated by non-Maharashtrians? And he himself answered that it was because the political parties and trade unions were controlled by non-Maharashtrians.

Again, this was not true, but whatever might be the arguments and facts against this line of appeal, it was likely to provide a satisfactory explanation to the average Marathi reading public, at least for the time being, since it had already been subjected to regional propaganda for some time. He declared that 'all the lungiwalas are criminals, gamblers, illicit liquor distillers, pimps, goondas, beggars and communists." 'I want the illicit liquor distiller to be Maharashtrian, the goonda

to be Maharashtrian, the Mawali to be Maharashtrian.'10 This line of propaganda certainly had to yield results when we realize the rivalries existing among goondas and bootleggers of various groups. No wonder the Maharashtrian goondas and bootleggers found a godfather in Bal Thackeray and his Shiv Sena. This must have added to his strength and given a new dimension to the movement he initiated.

In the same manner. Thackeray proceeded against the Udipi Hotels and the taxi trade. The demand was that 'Idli', 'Sambhar' must stop—these hotels were depriving the Maharashtrians of business and employment. It was argued that this state of affairs was made possible because of the domination of hotel unions by non-Maha rashtrians. Similarly, the taxi trade in Bombay city is owned by non-Maharashtrians—mainly Punjabis. This again, according to the Shiv Sena, was because of the non-Maharashtrian taxi trade union controlled by George Fernandes. This was not at all true, because the trade was in the hands of non-Maharashtrians—Punjabis, Parsis and others—ever since its beginning and long before the present trade union leaders were born.

The next campaign was very rewarding for Thackeray. This happened when the Shiv Sena took up the plea that non-Maharashtrians should be sent out of Bombay. For the first time, on October 30, 1966, the Sena impinged on the public mind in a big way. 'At a rally at Shivaji Park, the venom and vitriol that was poured out was directed against non-Maharashtrians ... But the principal target was Shri George Fernandes who, by then had pitted himself against Shri S. K. Patil and was vigorously canvassing for his own election to the Lok Sabha. At the end of the meeting some of the more inflamed members of .

^{5.} A Bombay Journalist, 'How did it Grow?' Mainstream, 6.4.1968. p. 13.

^{6.} Ibid., pp. 13-14.

^{7.} Ibid., pp. 14.

^{8.} Dilip Chitre, op. cit. The Hindustan Times, 28.2.1969.

^{9.} Quoted by Prabhakar Waidya, Shiv Sena: The Fascist Menance, p. 5.

the crowd stoned Udipi hotels. The slogan they shouted were: "Madrashana Haklum Lava" (Drive out the Madrasis) and "Idli Sambar Bandh Kara" (Stop Idli Sambar).'11

This was at a time when recession in Bombay was at its peak. Unemployment was increasing and the educated youth was frustrated. The plea that outsiders should be driven out of Bombay might have meant many things to the unemployed and the unaccommodated. It could easily mislead such people to the belief that jobs and shelters could be found through this method.

Thackeray went on to publish half truths about statistics of persons employed in various offices in Bombay and showed how the non-Maharashtrians were monopolising jobs in Maharashtra at the cost of Maharashtrians. One of the Shiv Sena publications came to the following conclusion about this after making one so-called survey: 'Though outwardly Maharashtra appears growing rapidly industrially, one cannot overlook the fact that the industries are being manned by outsiders. They also find that in this land of their birth, they cannot get a suitable opening, while an outsider of comparable merit gets one for the mere asking, because he has a godfather to look after his interests where Maharashtrians have none ... The truth is that the selection to these posts were not at all made on the score of merit.'12

But, a Maharashtrian scholar in a learned paper has expressed altogether a different view on this issue. She says 'insistence on the strict adherence to rational principles of selection is fully justified. However, there is a lurking fear amongst the Marathi people that even if the

Whatever might be the truth, the unemployed and the frust-rated Maharashtrian youth would find it easier to believe the Shiv Sena line, rather than the more difficult way of studying the facts.

Men, placed under such circumstances, can hardly think of the fact that Maharashtra has about 22 per cent of India's total capital investment and, at the same time, has only 9 per cent of India's population. On the other hand, the four southern States, with a population of 25 per cent of the total population of the country, have only 15 per cent of the total capital invest-ment. The capital investment per head in Maharashtra is Rs 135, whereas in the four southern States it is only Rs 33 per head.14 Again, U.P. with a population of 16.65 per cent of the total population, has only 7.25 per cent of the total investment.

Maybe these facts do not attract the unemployed Maharashtrians. While capital flows to Maharashtra from other parts of India, naturally non-Maharashtrians also will flow to Maharashtra in search of employment. If this is prevented, and if people in other

States decide to boycott goods made in Maharashtra, what will happen to Maharashtra and the country? How will the Shiv Sena line of driving away the non-Maharashtrians affect the estimated four million Maharashtrians in other States of India? 15

It is instructive to know that in every 10,000 people in Maharashtra only 275 are Hindi speaking, whereas in Madhya Pradesh alone there are 266 Marathi people in every 10,000 of the population. In Maharashtra there are 159 Kannada speaking people in every 10,000 of the population while there are 488 Marathi speaking people in Mysore in every 10,000 of the population.¹⁶ It is futile to think in these lines for those who have accepted the truth of Indian nationhood. However, this shows how chauvinism can boomerang and what damage it can do to those whose cause it is pretendin to plead. Evidently, Thackeray's sympathetic listeners and readers do not bother. To them the simple solution offered by a man obviously out to exploit the misfortunes of people around him, looks very attractive.

In all this propaganda, there has been a continuous under-current of the idea of a non-Maharashtrian conspiracy Maharashtrians: against the non-Maharashtrian dominated trade union conspiracy against the Maharashtrian, South Indian conspiracy in the job market to keep out the Maharashtrians. Udipi people's conspiracy against Maharashtrians, taxiwalas' conspiracy, and so on and so forth. This scapegoatism in the background of the cultural factors already stated, awakens in the mind of Maharashtrians strong in-group feelings as well as the spirit of Shivaji to drive away the alien and fight against this

rational principles are strictly followed, they stand little chance of surpassing the South Indians in white collar and professional jobs. In interviews and opinions published in the Marathi press at that time, Marathi officers and employers had acknowledged the South Indian's skill in stenotyping, his better knowledge in English and his industriousness. In business, industry, administration, in technical and scientific fields South Indians have earned influential positions by merit and hard work.'13

^{13.} Sudha Gogate, 'Rise of Regionalism in Bombay City.'

^{14.} The data as per Annual Survey of Industries 1961, Vol. I, quoted by Prabhakar Waidya, Op. cit., Pp. 16-17.

^{15.} Ibid., p. 16.

Gazetteer of India, Vol. I., Appendix VII — Proportion of persons speaking major languages in each of the states, 1061

^{11.} G. N. Acharya, 'The Growling Tiger', Mainstream, § 6.4.68.

Kapilacharya, Shiv Sena Speaks, Pp. 13-14.

imagined injustice. Moreover, it helps to console one's misfortune—unemployment, incompetence or whatever it might be—and shifts it all to the conspiracy of others.

Like an octopus, the Shiv Sena became powerful as it spread its tentacles to various directions—gangsterdom, unemployed youth, the capitalists, the ruling circle and even some of the opposition parties came under its grip for different reasons. By helping to defeat a politician of Krishna Menon's standing twice during the 1967 elections to Parliament, the Shiv Sena demonstrated its unmistakable potentiality as an institution of political bossism and attained a notoriety and status that brought it closer to the seats of power-both political and economic-in the city of Bombay. S. K. Patil's local-man theory became effective only when it converged with the 'sons of the soil' cry of the Shiv Sena to defeat the 'Lungiwala' and crypto-communist. brought recognition to the Shiv Sena from various sources opposed to Leftist ideology and the trade union movement.

The frequent announcement from the police authorities that the Shiv Sena has nothing to do with this riot or that riot, the common belief in Bombay that the police do not deal with the Shiv Sena the way they should, the idea that the government itself is partisan, the admitted fact that the Police Commissioner made an unscheduled stop of former Finance Minister Morarji Desai's car on the way from the aerodrome to facilitate the presentation of a memorandum by the Shiv Sena—an incident which led to the unprecedented riots of 1969 in Bombay -are all facts which gave the Shiv Sena an image of being powerful and resourceful. During the 1969 riots, Bal Thackeray, who was put behind bars, was allowed to confer with political party leaders and issue statements. Moreover, police vans were used to broadcast his statement!

Then comes the propaganda of deeds such as preventing and permitting of cinema shows, stoning and looting of shops, protecting and condoning of shopkeepers who pay their mite to the Shiv Sena to buy security of business and safety of their skin; social services such as establishment of Shiv Sena stalls. preventing sale in municipal shops to non-Maharashtrians. and threats of picketing of teashops unless rates are reduced. These deeds have proved very remunerative to the Shiv Sena; the earlier practice of certain goondas collecting hafta from petty shopkeepers for providing them security, thus got elevated to the level of a social movement whose leadership had approaches to the State Ministers, police officials, political parties and captains of industry. All these smack of imported American bossism of the Tammany Hall type.

A lthough in some respects the Shiv Sena appears American in conception, there is more of Hitlerism in its approach. Shiv Sena meetings are big affairs, carefully planned to build up the Senapati (Commander-in-Chief Bal Thackeray). His entry on to the stage is accompanied by a coterie of subordinates, saffron flags, the garlanded bust of Shivaji, singing of martial songs (Povadas) that speak Maratha glory in the battlefield. and the blast of Tutari to the martial notes of which Shivaji's legion galleped to battle. The fact that the organisation is no democratic nonsense, deserves special mention. The Pramukh. that is, the Senapati, has several shakha pramukhs who take orders from him. There is no committee, no election, nothing of the kind.17

It is interesting to note the following words of Bal Thacke-

ray: 'Yes, I am a dictator, why should we have so many rulers? It is a Hitler that is needed in India today.'¹³ 'Why should India want democracy? We must have a Hitler here.'¹⁹ In his 'Marmik', he published the blessings of a reader who says, 'Be famous as Hitler; be a Chhatrapati, a king like Shivaji, and rule over us.'²⁰

A social movement does not grow in isolation; in a democracy like ours it has to compete with other movements, their appeals and ideologies. Then, how could the Shiv Sena grow in a situation in which there existed strong trade union movements, communist and socialist parties, the Indian National Congress with its professions of secular democracy and a socialist pattern, the Jana Sangh with its extraordinary sense of nationalism and its advocacy of a unitary govern-ment and its patriotic fervour, and also the ideology of free competition of the Swatantra type? Apparently, the chauvinist fascist type of Shiv Sena has not even the slightest chance of surviving in the company of these powerful forces, which by their professed ideologies, have to be in opposition to the Shiv Sena. But the afct is entirely different. Each one of them, in actual practice, nursed the Shiv Sena with varying degrees of affection.

When one set of trade unionists was attacked by the Shiv Sena, the rival trade unionists did not mind. And, at least, in the heart of the working class in Parel, the Girni Kamgar Union office was atacked by the Shiv Sena, and Bal Thakeray issued a statement. 'I am proud of the Shiv Sainiks who fought the reds.'²¹ Communists and other

^{17.} H. R. Pardiwala, The Shiv Sena, Why and Why Not? Pp. 8-9.

^{18.} Nawa Kal (19.8.1967), Quoted by Prabhakar Waidya, Op. Cit. P. 5

^{19.} Quoted qbid.,, P. 4.

^{20.} Quoted Ibid., P. 27.

^{21.} Free Press Journal, 30.12.1967, quoted *Ibid.*, P. 7.

progressive elements who opposed the Shiv Sena were inhibited by their regard for mass appeal. They probably thought they should not offend the feelings of the masses even if they were wrong. So, the normal tendency was to disagree with the strategy and tactics but to agree with the grievances of the Shiv Sena.

The Maharashtra Congress and the former BPCC of S. K. Patil had a rivalry of long standing. So, it is believed that the leadership of the Maharashtra Congress found an instrument in the Shiv Sena to Maharashtrianize Bombay and nullify the non-Maharashtrian dominated BPCC and its leader, S. K. Patil. The BPCC liked the Shiv Sena on two counts. First, for the help it wanted to defeat Krishna Menon. Second, the anti-trade union and anti-communist stand of the Shiv Sena was to the liking of the capitalist financiers of the BPCC. It may be recalled that once, when S. K. Patil was embarrassed by the Shiv Sena, he told the Sena to make use of the money it was getting for the purpose for which it was given. Similarly, the PSP with its chronic hatred of Communists became com-rades-in-arms of the Shiv Sena and together they fought the municipal elections. It is believed that the PSP has lost many of its workers to the Shiv Sena in the process.

The Jana Sangh too wanted the Shiv Sena to defeat Krishna Menon. Moreover, anti-communism was very much to its taste. So also did the Swatantra Party find a very effective weanon of strike-breakers and trade union breakers in the Shiv Sena. Thus, Bal Thackeray's exploitation became the function of exploitability of a situation. And, in all this, the chauvinism that was whipped up with its historical background and the present existential basis was such that it almost inhibited the political parties in calling a spade a

spade and directly opposing it, even if they wanted to.

In the context of these social processes and forces in the urban life of Bombay and the neighbourhood, one may ask what is the function of the Shiv Sena? And whom does it serve and how?

- 1. As we have already seen, the Sena has activized strong regional consciousness and ethnocentric feeling—a type of atavism towards the Maratha imperial days which is not only irrelevant and unrealistic today, but positively harmful for the nation.
- 2. It has employed this heightened regional frame of reference to create a split between the Maharashtrians and non-Maharashtrians.
- 3. On an irrational and linguistic basis, it has wrongly educated the people to misunderstand the urban chaos and the misery that exists in the city by making scapegoats of outsiders. Thus, by diverting the attention of the people into the wrong direction, it plays the role of a shield to all those agencies—the Government of Maharashtra, the capitalist employers who fail to provide amenities and accommodation to their workers and also to the local administration.
- 4. Under the pretext of driving out the outsiders, the Shiv Sena's pseudo-social service of slum clearance actually hits the 'The fact poor Maharashtrians. is that the biggest and the most important single linguistic group in the million hutment dwellers is Marathi.' Thackeray's demand that 'demolish and burn all the hutments', if implemented 'the first and foremost victims will by the Marathi Hutment dwellers' people.'22 associations are mostly Left-criented bodies. Attacking them solves the dual purpose of weakening the Left and providing the land thus cleared of hut-

- ments to the rich class of speculators and blackmarketeers of luxury flats.²³ Similarly, the drive against street vendors under the pretext that it was directed against loongiwallas would really hurt the Maharashtrians because among the vendors the biggest chunk are the Maharashtrians, next come the Sindhis and Uttar Bharatiyas and last come the Tamilians
- 5. The Shiv Sena's main role has been to break the trade union movement—by disrupting meetings, playing the role of black legs, attacking trade union offices and even allegedly murdering trade union leaders.

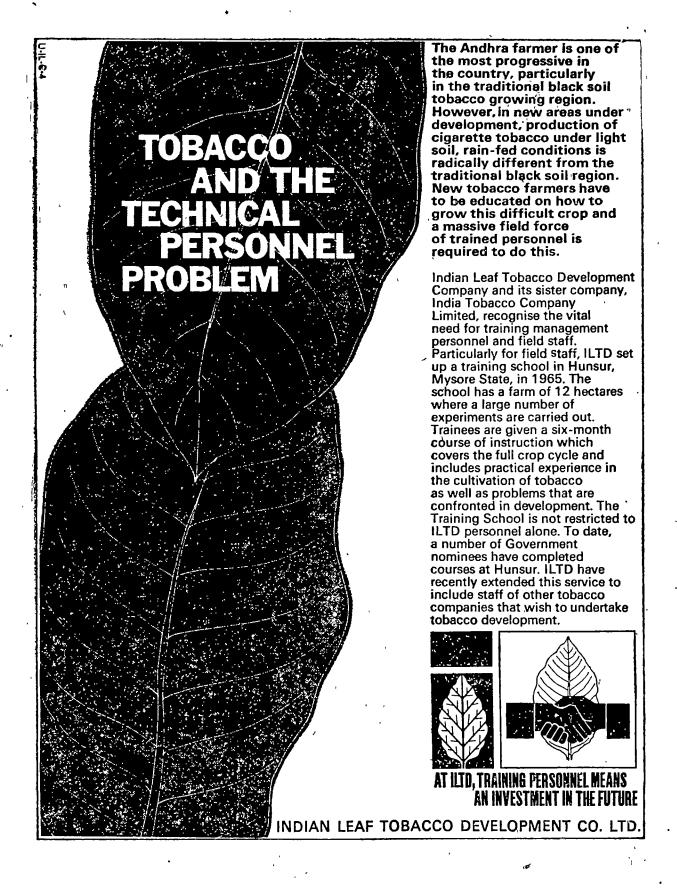
and Keraliyans.24

- 6. It persistently opposes the communists and all shades of Leftists and promises to keep Bombay city safe from the red menace.
- 7. It is closely allied to the Swatantra Party and the reactionary elements in the Congress Party, or presently, the Congress parties. The Shiv Sena actively campaigned for many reactionary Congressmen during the elections.
- 8. The Shiv Sena chief, Bal Thackeray, has openly declared that the Tatas and Birlas are the 'Bread givers and friends of the Marathi people'.

One may safely conclude from these activities of the Shiv Sena that the revivalist and malignant regionalism that it whips up is only an effective yet unscrupulous form of mass appeal which has nothing to do with the welfare of even the Maharashtrians, except that it helps the Sena to grow. The power so gathered by the Shiv Sena goes to the making of an amoral institution of Political Boss' which, objectively, speaking becomes a hirable instrument or a sword arm to defend the rich capitalist class and their collaborators in politics.

^{23.} Ibid.,

^{24.} Ibid.,



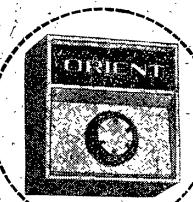


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THE fourth general election brought about an air of uncertainty. A precarious Centre presided over a wide spectrum of provincial coalitions. It was no accident that the emergence or reactivation of the numerous 'Senas' coincided with this poli-

tical impasse. And, to make such deduction obvious, soon after, the mid-term polls returned a powerful and determined Centre, the 'Senas' died away or relapsed into dormancy. But where the 'Sena' had sufficient strength to sustain itself, it has continued, like the 'Gopal Sena' of Kerala.

Volunteer organisations as adjuncts of political parties have preceded Senas. Political parties are known to have organised para military wings, but the 'Sena', in a peculiar Indian way, seemed to differ from a mere storm troop. For one thing, it wasn't all that para military, falling short of a para military political corps in the matter of arms, and even efficiency. But since it had to match disorganised patterns of resistance only, it proved as dangerous.

Almost all parties in Kerala got busy organising their volunteer organizations soon after the fourth general elections. The Swatantra Party and the breakaway Kerala Congress and some other far Right elements created the Samrakshaka Sena (literally, the protectionary force) and even gave its members an unpleasantly reminiscent 'S.S.' insignia. The Congress Seva Dal of course was in existence. The CPI's Red-Shirt volunteers were a considerable force, but not so the Muslim League's Green Shirts. The biggest and most effective of all was, quite understandably, the volunteer force of the Marxists, which was soon nicknamed the 'Gopal Sena'.

The State had witnessed innumerable demonstrations by these forces. The CPI organised huge processions of its Red-Shirt volunteers on many occasions in important towns. The party claims to have 10,000 volunteers. The Muslim League (when it was an ally of the CPM and, therefore, anti-national)

apparently had inhibitions about showing strength. On one occasion, they just let 200 Green Shirts surface at a party meeting. The SS staged an 'extraordinary' demonstration in the Central Travancore town of Kottayam by having a massive rally of these volunteers in December, 1967. The Marxist marches were almost always overwhelmingly impressive. The march by over 10,000 young Marxist volunteers during the party conferences showed that they were all well trained and disciplined and more organised than their counterparts in other parties.

he decision to form a volunteer corps by the CPM was taken in August 1967 and the idea was mooted at a meeting of the State Committee of the party. A. K. Gopalan, after whom the Sena later came to be known, hastened its formation. The 'Sena went into action' for the first time during a Kerala bundh in September that year, when there was a clash between Congress and Marxist the volunteers.

According to A. K. Gopalan, the party decided to form a sena for not only 'self-defence' of party workers and maintenance of order at party conferences, but also for dealing with antisocial elements. Addressing the concluding function of a training camp for officers of the Sena at Kannankara in Calicut district in October 1967, Gopalan spelt out the role of the corps. According to him, the Sena is intended to 'play the role of a supplementary police force' to protect the interest of peasants. It is trained even to shed blood and sacrifice life in the 'final battle for the overthrow of the bourgeoise Congress government at the Centre'.

A carefully chalked out programme for building up an officer-cadre is now under im-

plementation. These officers will go to villages and train the rank and file. A significant feature of this programme is the engagement of ex-Servicemen and retired and dismissed members of the para-military Malabar Special Police for training the volunteers ('Indian Express': December 14, 1967).

An August 1967, and March 1968, hundreds of volunteers were given training in PT and in Kalaripayattu, the intricate discipline of Kerala's traditional physical combat. In May 1968, a statewide camp was held at Palghat for district captains of the corps. This was followed by training camps in the districts. At a press conference in Alleppey in November, 1968 ('Mathrubhumi'. November 24) Gopalan said that the party was organising a volunteer corps in all the districts. In certain districts, the Marxist leader said, the strength of the corps would be 10,000. In Alleppey, it was proposed to set up a 10,000 strong corps among the coir workers. Similar corps were also planned to be formed in Cannanore and Quilon districts consisting of handloom and cashew factory workers, respec-Since October 1967, tively. when the first training camp for officers was held, 600 officers had received training in 20 camps held in various parts of the State.

The then Chief Minister, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, saw nothing wrong with this programme of organising a disciplined, trained volunteer corps. In fact, he expressed the view that it was necessary for keeping the peace at party meetings. He also justified the existence of the Sena by pointing out that other parties including Congress had such corps. (There were reports that A. K. Gopalan had said that the volunteers were necessary for not only protection of party workers and pea-

sants but also for taking revenge on political opponents).

The explanation given by the Marxist leaders did not satisfy all sections of the people and the formation of the Sena and its activities became the subject of heated controversy in the State. In fact, at one time, Panambilli Govinda Menon, who was the Union Law Minister. gave a call to his party men to arm themselves against the Marxists if they intimidated them. This led to a bitter conflict between the Congress and Marxists. Even as the controversy raged, there were clashes and the Marxists went ahead with their programme of enlisting and training volunteers. There were reports that the party had almost trained 25,000 volunteers by that time.

It was widely believed that several camps where intensive training was imparted to Marxist volunteers were run with the help and connivance of the Marxist Government which was then in power. Some sections of the people have watched the growth of the Sena with apprehension. Three years ago, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee in a report to the party High Command, pointed out the dangers posed by the Marxist corps. It said: "The organisation of a Marxist volunteer corps trained by ex-servicemen in the use of arms and coached, by partymen through study classes, has been the latest development, constituting a serious threat to peace and maintenance of law and order . if there is a mass struggle against the Centre, the Marxist volunteers will be its vanguard.'

The KPCC also referred to the secretive nature of the training: 'Considerable scare exists among the people about the functioning of the Marxist volunteers corps, one of whose training camps was recently inaugurated by the Chief Minister in a remote forest area in Mananthwadi. To the suspicion of many, government officials who accompanied the

Chief Minister, were asked to wait outside and the Chief Minister and other party workers went into the forest. Reports indicate that the training is being given in convenient hide-outs to escape public attention.'

The KPCC's concern was understandable as there were reports that the training included defensive and offensive tactics and bayonet training. According to unconfirmed reports, the volunteers were even trained in the use of grenades. There were also reports that films on guerilla warfare were shown at the training camps and these films were supplied by a certain 'friendly' country. These reports also later suggested that this 'friendly' country was told by the Government of India to give such films to private parties without bringing government into the picture.

With the removal of the Marxists from power, the Sena lost the clandestine protection of the government. Simultaneously, there arose the Naxalite cult, certainly more credible as a cult. The Naxalites struck with bombs and guns and bamboo spears, and however ridiculous the arsenal, it certainly was violent and active. And they took to the forests, to swoop down in their sporadic and futile invasions. The Naxalites thus are a secret society all right. But not so the 'Gopal Sena'. It is a militant volunteer force, but when and where it became a secret society is hard to determine. The Marxists talk of overthrowing the bourgeoise government, but they also do have constitutionalist regressions. Right now they are embarassedly denying the existence of the 'Gopal Sena' as such.

But, the Congress fears that the Sena is biding its time. Should the State's present leadership fail, they fear it would become active again. Kerala's Congress Home Minister, however, sees no immediate threat from the 'Gopal Sena'.

Books

Someone asked a journalist in a bustling coffee house of New Delhi recently, 'why don't you utilize your talents more fruitfully' and went on to propose something. The offer seemed fairly attractive, but an elaboration of the implications of the proposal dampened his initial enthusiasm. He had to operate in a secret manner without perhaps even knowing whom he was serving. The offer had obviously to be spurned.

What was revealing was the questioner's claim that 'you would meet many of your friends when you start taking your first lessons!' There may be sufficient veracity in such a claim as secret organisations abound not only in the capital but also in other big and small towns of the country. You meet so many people all the time. You also know that their public stance is mere camouflage; what you might not discover easily is their actual affiliation.

This much is in the realm of the unknown. The operators in this realm might be either a group of illegal commercial and monetary transactioners or members of some intelligence network, Indian or foreign. It is, therefore, easier for them to conduct their operations than those whose identity as coherent groups is well-known, even deliberately paraded, and yet much of their matrix of activities is secret.

The latter reference has obviously been made with regard to certain organisations which are fighting for a place in the political decision-making apparatus, even if it is under the guise of cultural, intellectual or social activities. Such organisations are compelled to cover up their inherent fanaticism by a veil of secrecy.

The concern of the present discussion is to study the nature and motivations of the latter category of secret societies based on the findings and publications that have recently come out.

The most vocal group which tends to distort the real perspective of its motivations in the garb of cultural activities is the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. No amount of pleadings and convincing can prove that the activities of this group are confined to culture alone. Its aims are undoubtedly political and it clamours to establish a militant type of social milieu where only the Hindus (and there, too, not the low caste ones)

would reign supreme and compel all others to live as second and third class citizens.

The fundamentals of the RSS principles, as given cogently by Surendra Bahadur Saxena, and which would help understand the motivations of this organisation in a clear manner, are given below:

- a) Hindus should be welded into one ideology and culture, irrespective of provincial angularities;
- b) Their slogans are: Hindustan Hinduon Ka Hai (India belongs to Hindus) and Hindutva Hi Rashtriyata Hai (Hinduism alone is nationalism);
- c) Sanskrit is the original language of India;
- d) The country is considered as one Akhand Bharat, the political division of the country notwithstanding;
- e) Bhagwa Dhwaj, the age-old flag used by all Hindu kings is the Guru; offerings are bestowed on the Guru for financing the organisation; this offering is known as Guru Dakshina;
- f) Discipline and physical exercise are the first love; RSS members congregate at some place every day and take training to inculcate courage and character among the Hindu youth:¹

The element of fanaticism which is deliberately inculcated in the Swayamsewak to blur his vision and have a one-sided view of his association with the organisation is explained by Saxena when he enumerates among the virtues of the supreme boss of the RSS, Guru Golwalkar, the following:

- a) Guruji is a superman; he is infallible.
- b) He can foresee the future and is, therefore, called Yugdrasta; he is able to know the news without reading the newspapers, through meditation
- c) His chest is as hard as stone because he observes Akhand Brahmacharya.²

An indication of the style of functioning of the RSS can be had from the fact that secrecy is observed in all its activities; the meetings are

Surendra Bahadur Saxena, R.S.S.: A Descriptive Study, Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee, New Delhi, 1970 p. 4.

^{2.} Ibid., p. 18.

never publicly announced, unless they are arranged for some special purpose. Taking of photographs in meetings is generally prohibited.³ Individual donations are kept secret along with the names of the donors. No account is kept of the donations given to the Sangh.⁴

The best assessment of the framework of the Sangh's activities and thought pattern can be had from an analysis of the writings and speeches of Guru Golwalkar and other senior Swayamsewaks. N. L. Gupta views the mind of Golwalkar thus: 'To him "glory and greatness" of *Hindu Rashtra* is the mission. It is this cultural vision based on the race idea that, according to him, must inform all walks of life. All the non-Hindus, Muslims and Christians, in particular, must merge with the Hindu nation, failing which they need to be 'nationalised' like the Jews under Hitler's rule in Germany.'⁵

The well-known economist, V. M. Dandekar, has thus summarised the attitude of Guru Golwalkar and the RSS: 'Guruji has called upon all the minorities to return to Hinduism. He thinks that their return to Hinduism may make the process of integration smooth. He says that most of the non-Hindus in India were originally Hindus. Therefore, he would not call their return a conversion. He prefers using the term of a change or return to their homes. A conversion ceremony may be necessary only with a view to creating an emotional atmosphere or psychological feeling in their minds that they have returned to Hinduism.'6

Hilter comes nearest to Guru Golwalker in political thinking and ruthless fascist methodology. K. K. Gangadharan has very ably compared Hitlerism and Golwalkarism in their conceptual similarities and attitude patterns. He has graphically shown that Golwalkarism is not Hinduism; it is Hitlerism under the Hindu garb.⁷

These vicious doctrines of the RSS do not operate merely on the theoretical plane as an attempt to vitiate the minds of people. There is

 It should be recalled that the cameras of two photographerreporter of New Delhi newspapers were seized when they wanted to take pictures of an R.S.S. rally in which knives and orner sharp weapons were used in the practice session. sufficient evidence that the militant volunteers of the Sangh create havoc in times of communal disturbances, and are mostly responsible for sparking them off. This is a question which those at the highest level of governmental policy-making have to take serious note of.

Here is an instance of RSS butchery given by a former insider in the RSS: "...And I had been taught and tutored by the RSS to look upon every Muslim as a snake which must be killed. I thought of the two handsome children back in my hometown (Haweli Lakha, Distt. Montgomery, W. Punjab) who had been murdered and thrown into a discarded well outside the town. They were the children of the Sheikh—the ever jovial Sheikh who ran a book shop in the town's only Bazaar ... It was alleged that an RSS volunteer had done the hellish thing. At the time I did not believe that story. Some days later I learnt about who had murdered those innocent children."

One could go on quoting from Guru Golwalkar's two books, Bunch of Thoughts and We, or Our Nationhood Defined to show how vicious is the doctrine propounded by him and how dangerous are such concepts to the very vitals of democratic functioning. Nothing perhaps could be a more devastating critique of Guru Golwalkar than an objective assessment of his own writings. Anyone with the slightest degree of sensitivity and mental balance would turn against him if he read what the Guru himself has said again and again.

The other sample of a secret society is symbolised by the Jamaat-e-Islami. There is a great difference between the natures of functioning of the Sangh and the Jamaat. But both are often bracketed; perhaps because these two stand out as the most rigid adherents to their commitments amongst all such organisations. On the intellectual plane, perhaps, both play a similar type of role in their areas of operation. But it should be noted that while the RSS is a para-military organisation, the Jamaat is not so—at least in the set-up that exists in India today. No study has been made of the functioning of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan to enable us to know its real face in that country. We are told that the party is actively involved in the politics of Pakistan but the methodology of its militant procedure, if any, in not known.

The Jamaat in India claims to be distinct from the similar organisation in Pakistan. But, it is very obvious that the entire inspiration has come from Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi who is the chief of the organisation in Pakistan. There are certain claims made in the inner circles of the organisation that the Jamaat has come a long way

^{4.} See Eklavya, How is R.S.S. Financed? Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee 1970, for a graphic account of the manner in which these donations are collected. The estimates of collection in 1969 given by an insider are also revealing and deserve the attention of the Central Government.

^{6.} N. L. Gupta, R.S.S. versus Democracy. S.V.C., 1971, Page 15.

^{6.} See V. M. Dandekar's article in Maharashtra Times follow-7 ing an interview given by Guru Golwalkar to Navakal published in its issues of January 1-2-1969. Quoted in Golwalkar and Caste System. Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee, 1970, p. 16.

See K. K. Gangadharan, Sociology of Revivalism, Kalamkar Prakashan, 1970 where the author has studied the absurdities involved in concepts like Indianization and Golwalkarism. He has also studied Shiv Sena in some detail.

See Ram Lali Dhooria, I was a Swayamsevak, Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee for the details of this and various other revealing episodes. Dhooria is presently a lecturer in a Delhi college and now a sworn enemy of the RSS and its creed.

from the founding days and there has also been some rethinking in the organisation during the last few years. But, these claims cannot be taken too seriously. The most crucial source book for the 240 odd 'members' and thousands of 'sympathisers' of the Jamaat remain Jamaat-e-Islami Ki Dawat⁹ and Islami Hukumat Kis Tarah Qaim Hoti Hai. 10

A comprehensive study of the mind of Maulana Maudoodi has been made by Moin Shakir. 11 He has found four ingredients of nationalism as viewed by Maudoodi. They are: (1) The sentiment of national pride. which compels a nation to exalt itself above all other nations in every respect; (2) the sentiment of national conciousness...which obliges man to support his nation whether it stands for right or wrong; (3) the sentiment of self-preservation which, to protect its visionary and actual interests, compels every nation to adopt tactics which may begin with selfdefence and go on to invasion; and (4) the sentiment of national prestige and national aggrandisement which produces in every progressive and powerful nation the assertion that it should dominate over the nations of the earth.12

Maudoodi rejects nationalism and pleads for the acceptance of Islam as the only alternative to nationalism. He has emphasised something like Muslim nationalism to replace the well-known concept of nationalism in India and other nations.

Debunking nationalism as a dangerous concept, Maudoodi feels that democracy, like nationalism, poses a challenge to the effective functioning of the Islamic State in the modern world. According to him, democracy and Islam cannot go together. Shakir explains that Maudoodi interprets the Hadith 'Be with the majority' in a manner unacceptable to many other modern interpreters of Islam. According to Maudoodi, what the prophet meant by majority was the majority of the 'real' Muslims.

Maudoodi, who rejects both nationalism and democracy, is not expected to favour a secular setup for the running of the affairs of a State. How could religion be kept away from the day-to-day life of a society? Religion is the main guiding force of any desirable State machinery, says Maudoodi.

Maudoodi suggests his own system of govern-

ment based on the following three principles:

- 1) Devotion to God against atheism;
- 2) Humanity against nationalism; and
- 3) Sovereignty of God and Khilafat of the people against sovereignty of the people.¹³

Based on these principles, the Jamaat leaders plead, the State machinery should be used. The Shariat should be applicable to all problems of the society. What is indirectly said is that even the non-Muslims should be governed by the laws of the Shariat. And, in this regard, some intellectuals of the Jamaat have also worked out the economic and social apparatus that should be desirable in a state following the Islamic laws. Can we then expect these leaders to accept a common civil code for all Indians?

The Jamaat holds out an invitation to all Muslims and non-Muslims to come forward and establish a social order based on the religious doctrine (more appropriately, Islamic laws). The meaning of such an invitation is extremely vicious and even dangerous. And, even though no militant programme is presently owned by the Jamaat, the possibility of increased hostility between Muslims and others because of the Jamaat's countless other retrograde policies and doctrines cannot be discounted. To counter the Jamaat propaganda, an effort is needed at the intellectual level, as the Jammat is most active at that level unlike other organisations like the Tablighi Jamaat or the Deeni Taalimi movement which are concentrating on Islamic awakening among the un-educated and less educated Muslims.

It should be noted that the ideas on nationalism, democracy and secularism discussed above are the brain child of Maulana Maudoodi and his supporters alone. Even the conservative general mass of Muslim opinion has no ill will towards any of these concepts. This is a clear advantage for the body of Muslim opinion makers.

There are many smaller organisations that should be studied in detail both among the Hindus and the Muslims. The scope of this paper is restricted as no studies on other groups are available for review.

Anees Chishti

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Abul Ala Mauddodi, Jamaat-e-Islami Ki Dawat Jamaat-e-Islami's Invitation), Markazi Maktaba, Jamaat-e-Islami, Hind, Delhi, Sixth reprint, October 1964.

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^{11.} See Moin Shakir, 'Islamic Neo-Revivalist Revaissance in Khilafat to Partition, Kalamkar Prakashan, 1970.

For an elaboration of Maudoodi's views on nationalism, see his booklet, Nationalism and India.

^{13.} See Jamaat-e-Islami Ki Dawat

^{14.} A very well-studied book, Ghair Sudi Bunk Kari (Banking without interest) by M. Nejatullah Siddiqui, the most influential ideologue of the Jameat today has given the banking structure in a situation where interest could be taken or given as that is, according to the orthodox, against the Shariat.

^{15.} See Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, *Hindustani Mussalman*, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow. Ali Mian, the most domineering conservative Muslim of north India has spoken eloquently of the Indian principles of secularism and democracy. It should be recalled that Ali Mian was among the founder members of the Jamaat but left the organisation soon after.

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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper SEMINAR to be published in the first issue every year after last day of February.

FORM IV

(See Rule 8)

- 1. Place of Publication .. New Delhi
- 2. Periodicity of its Publication .. Monthly
- 3. Publisher's Name
- Nationality Address
- 4. Printer's Name Nationality, Address
- 5. Editor's Name Nationality. Address
- 6. Names and Addresses of individuals who own the partners newspaper and holding or shareholders more than one per cent of the total capital:

- Romesh Thapar
- Indian 19, Kautilya Marg, New Delhi Romesh Thapar
- Indian 19, Kautilya Marg. New Delhi
- Romesh Thapar Indian 19, Kautilya Marg, New Delhi
- Romesh Thapar, 19, Kautilya Marg, New Delhi
- I, Romesh Thapar, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

R. THAPAR

Signature of Publisher Date: 25-2-1972

Communication

Your contributor, I. Ahmad, in his article 'Psychological Repercussions' (SEMINAR, February, 1972) claims that in my note on 'Bangla Desh and India' in the Economic and Political Weekly (August 14, 1971) I 'called for the Indian Military intervention in Bangla Desh, because . . . such intervention would ensure a change in the thinking and orientations of the Muslims in India.' This represents so extraordinary a distortion of what I wrote that I am a little puzzled about your contributor's motivation and intellectual honesty. Nowhere in my note did I ask for Indian military intervention either for the liberation of Bangla Desh or for the likely impact such intervention would have on the orientations of Indian Muslims. When I wrote the note in July 1971, military intervention was not being considered as a serious possibility. In fact the need, as it seemed then, was to make sure that we did not falter in our commitment to Bangla Desh. and it is to this that my note was devoted.

I considered then and I consider now that the emergence of Bangla Desh was vital for the growth of secular orientation among Indian Muslims. Let me quote what I actually wrote: "The significance of Bangla Desh goes far beyond the immediate question of the injustices suffered by the East Bengalis or the return of the refugees. Its emergence is vital for creating a new order in the Indian sub-continent. It is a necessary step in the re-orientation of the

Muslims of this area away from sectarianism and towards secularism and liberalism—a shift urgently needed for creating a more tolerant society.'

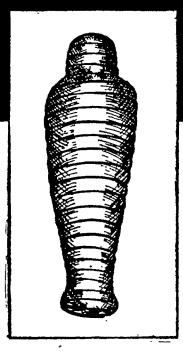
Nothing has happened since I wrote this to make me change my views on the subject, and I was happy to find Imtiaz Ahmad himself detailing out the various ways in which the emergence of Bangla Desh is likely to influence Muslim attitudes. What then accounts for this malevolent misrepresentations? Whatever may be Ahmads' reasons, he does no good to himself, to the cause of scholarship, or to that of Indian Muslims by resorting to such odius proceedings.

Because my views on this subject have been so grossly misrepresented by your contributor, please allow me to state that I abhor the use of force for compelling individuals or communities to change their attitudes, even if the attitudes in question were repellant and the use of force had some chance of success in changing them, because change brought about in this manner is unlikely to be lasting. Use of force against enemy countries in certain circumstances is of course an altogether different matter.

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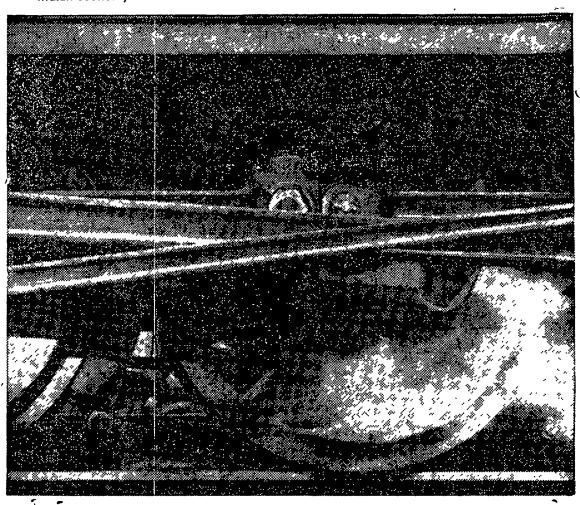
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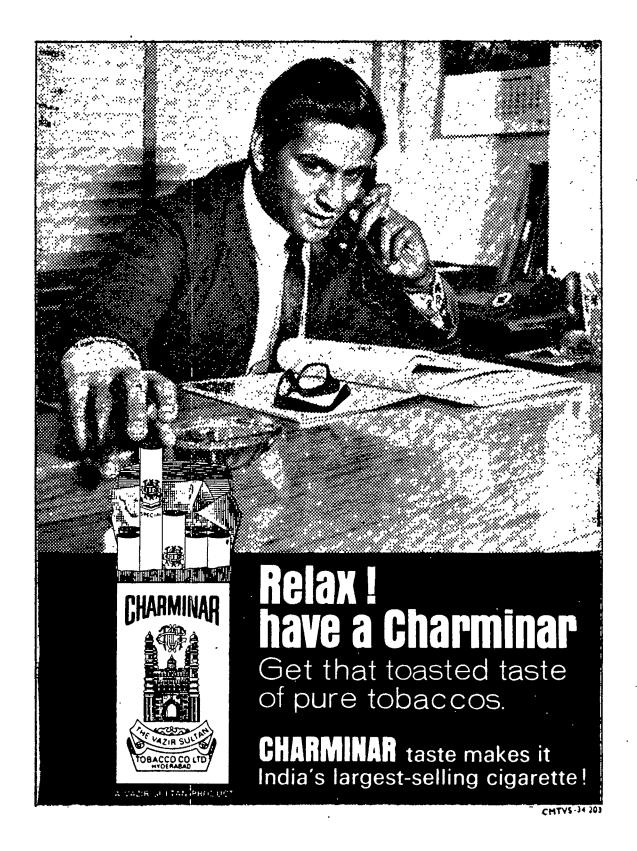
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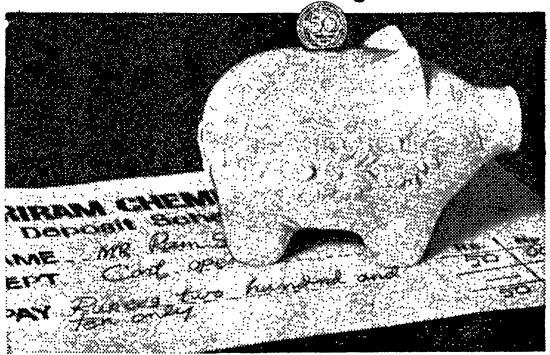


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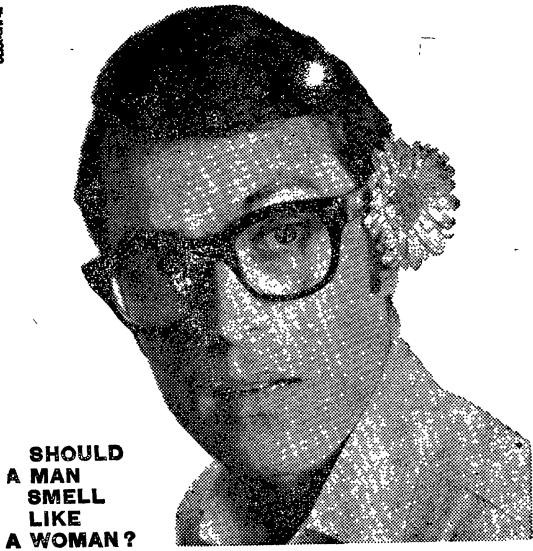




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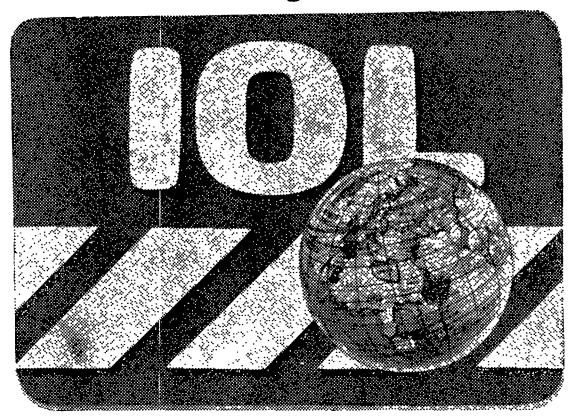
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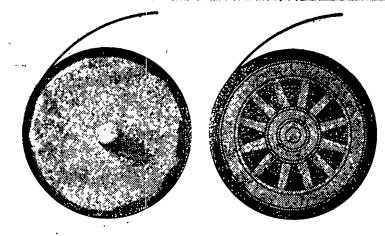
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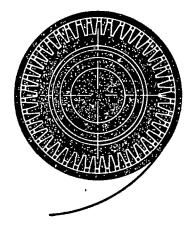
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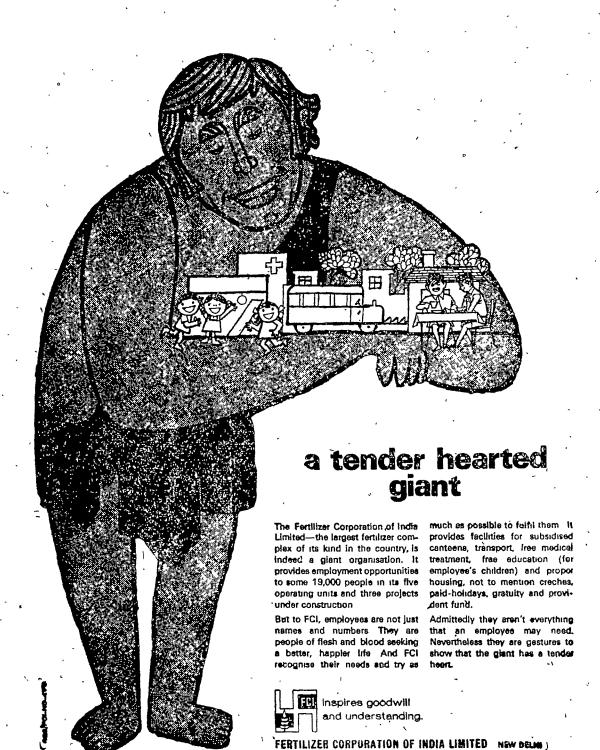
Development is proceeding in spite of the cultural attitudes, social institutions and political conflicts which sometimes seem to be such immovable barriers. It is not a smooth, uninterrupted progression, to be sure; rather, growth appears more as a series of fits and starts. "And yet," as Galileo is supposed to have said, "it moves!"





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COMMUNICATION

Received from A. S. Pilgrim (Delhi)

COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury

The problem

RECENTLY, a prominent Congress youth leader phrased his appeal for a stable government in West Bengal to mean a society where a young man and his mother can live in peace. If this oedipal effulgence seems too exceptional for our times, take the institution of the various communal pujas, where, often, you have a grand display of revolutionary literature and posters. Take the myriad literary magazines, not a small portion of which exclusively print poetry. Take the even greater number of theatre groups. Take the fact that even well-established pioneering business organisations managed by Bengalis have either collapsed or are tottering. The point is: it is not enough to recapitulate the obvious problems of West Bengal but to understand the special nature of the Bengali situation.

The hard facts are well-known—political instability, unemployment, criminal neglect of the countryside ever since independence, lack of industrial growth—a procession of inter-related problems that has been allowed to escalate to a chaos of almost insoluble proportions. The planners know about it, so do the politicians and one cannot do better than read Ranajit Roy's Agony of West Bengal for a quick re-appraisal. But the scenario for action will remain incomplete unless the surrealism of the situation is appreciated. Let us take an obvious example.

Now that there will be a stable government and much money is promised in the pipeline—

for development, for growth, for regeneration of industry—how is this precisely to be implemented?

It is sacrosanct that investment in the private sector in West Bengal means deployment of Marwari enterprise. That this is apparently inevitable can be further reinforced by a recent case history. A venerable British business house has been in trouble for some time and its shares had fallen to half their par value in the market. On the basis of a rumour that a Marwari businessman was buying over controlling interest, the shares immediately, jumped up by 50 per cent. It is to be noted that this particular Marwari businessman is basically a rentier, owner of real estate and has no background, reputation or experience of managing industry. Such is the charisma of Marwari enterprise in Bengal that public confidence in business profitability is synonymous with it, irrespective of the odds.

But, this very style of enterprise is also largely responsible for Bengal's decline as an industrial centre. Much is made of Bengal's labour troubles but even at the height of the 'gherao' phase, very few Marwari industries were affected. The leading entrepreneurs had little difficulty in striking deals with the so-called militant CPM trade unions. There is no doubt that the Marwaris will demand maximum concessions

from government in their coming role of industrial knight chevaliers. Is this to be allowed? Is there to be private sector investment at any cost? Can a new pattern be sparked off?

It is well-known that the Bengali does not make a successful businessman. At any rate, he cannot compete with the Marwari. It is a skill he has yet to acquire. Nothing is incontrovertible. Given proper encouragement and time, he is far better equipped to build industry which will be more in line with the nation's goals. He has no capital. The public financial institutions have to help him. Government policy has to be so formulated that short-term convenience does not bring in its wake more complicated long-term problems. The Prime Minister recognises the legitimacy of local aspirations.

The major part of any such inspiration has to do with the economic facts of life. While it is important to generate employment, the processes and the machinery through which it is done, is equally important. When the more dynamic Punjabi farmer was making inroads into Rajasthan's newly developed desert land, the local farmer had to be given necessary protection by the State. Since free-for-all capitalist enterprise is not our national policy, it should not be too difficult to help the lotus-eating Bengali to find his feet in business.

Along with this measure some attempt must be made at clearing up the antiquated Aegean stables of Bengal's traditional industries—tea, jute, engineering, etc., even if it means the bold step of nationalisation. The other area of heavy expenditure—that is, developmental investment by the State, creates even more complex questions of implementation. A tired, corrupt, pessimistic administration, archaic unworkable public institutions (has civilisation ever produced anything more corrupt and so entirely useless as the Calcutta Corporation?)—how are these obsolescences to be quickened into fruitful action?

Here, we enter an area of darkness which can only be illumined by new inspirations, by political leadership of a new kind. The Bengali, in spite of his well-known capacity for revolt, seems to take the decay of his institutions for granted. There is hardly any protest against the appalling state of civic facilities. While prolonged battles are fought between two trade union factions of the same factory on abstract issues of correct revolutionary elan, causing enormous hardship to the workers and their families, these very same militant citizens will buy black market rice without a question. From the topmost elite to the humble menial, everyone accepts graft, corruption, inefficiency as incontrovertible facts of life. Thus, not only is there no effort to get things done, any initiative for action is looked

at with suspicion and soon defeated by the sheer weight of collective apathy.

At the heart of this problem is a deeply ingrained sense of self-pity that has grown proportionately with the decline and fall of Bengal's past greatness. The failure to produce any personality of national stature, after Subhas Bose and Tagore (Dr. B. C. Roy notwithstanding), and certainly the dramatic partition of the State, have been the main reasons. But the over-riding necessity for adjustment to post-independent realities has been equally crippling.

The Bengali hegemony over middle class occupations on an all-India scale was soon challenged by the emerging new middle classes all over the country, specially in the eastern States of India and Uttar Pradesh. Yet, the all-pervasive bhadralog' inhibitions of the Bengali middle class prevented it from finding alternative energetic expressions in business, industry, agriculture. A sense of isolation previously glorified to superior exclusiveness, now began to look like a conspiracy against the Bengali. Combined with his inherent flair for individualism, this feeling of alienation from the mainstream of national life inevitably led to local loyalties of political protest.

Thus, the proliferation of Left parties—all with the common platform of protest but fragmented in terms of effective political power. Protest and agitation became a habit, feeding on existing frustrations. People in this State were no longer ready to accept their human condition as immutable, but this rise in political consciousness was not matched by a corresponding rise in the quality of Left leadership. There was also the continuing, nagging need for a father figure.

Bangla Desh and a determined involvement in the affairs of West Bengal at last convinced the Bengali that he is Indira Gandhi's special concern. The Bengali, in any case, finds it easier to respond to a mother figure. So, perhaps a new situation obtains today in West Bengal. Perhaps self-pity will be transformed to self-confidence—Bengalis are volatile, if nothing else.

In all discussions about West Bengal, because of the monstrous presence of Calcutta, there is a tendency to forget the countryside. Not surprising, therefore, that only some ten per cent of the villages are electrified. Despite the ubiquitous 'bhadralog' image of the Bengali, the real strength of the State rests in its great peasant masses. They are farmers of tremendous fortitude—hard working and highly skilled. Modern inputs have arrived at the Bengal countryside only recently—much later, than other parts of India. But, already the results are phenomenal. In a State where hardly any wheat was ever grown, recordbreaking performances are now less than rare. We all know that the green revolution is no final

answer to the agrarian problem, but within its limits, Bengal seems poised for achievements, which will more than match the successes elsewhere in the country.

It is fashionable to be contemptuous of the Bengali (a fashion, in fact, started by Kipling a long time ago) and no one is more viciously contemptuous of the Bengali than a Bengali himself. Problem city, problem State, law and order, violence—the Indian connotation of a whole range of pejorative words, seems to pair off well with Bengal. What is not adequately appreciated is the fact that processes of transition need more sophisticated measurement in an uneven reality like India.

The very elements which would seem to stand in the way of progress in Bengal, may well turn out to be great assets in the coming decades.

The love of poetry and song, ludicrous sentimentality, the lack of a determined drive towards material success—all this, in another context makes for a rather desirable kind of community. Communalism, separatism, provincialism, chauvinism—darknesses that plague most of Indian polity—have always been non-starters here. In this wretched, miserable, poor State, nobody really starves—not since the Bengal famine anyway. Workers out on strike for even a whole year, have never gone without a meal—nor their families—friends or neighbours or relatives have shared their difficulties, as have thousands of familes from the days of partition with the fleeing East Bengal refugees until early this year.

Political consciousness never does any harm—an enhanced sense of their rights will only make people more watchful about the exploiting classes which are so powerful in our society. The intervening years of violence may well serve as a warning or as a stimulator. Who wants the peace of the graveyard? The kind of peace which envisages perpetuation of social injustices, the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer, is no longer possible in Bengal. Any leadership that will temporise on this issue will have to face devastating consequences. Violence is not alien to the Bengali ethos and it is clear that if violence returns in future as political strategy, it will do so in a much more deep-rooted form.

Surrealism is after all only a heightened appreciation of reality. So there is not all that great a distance between revolution and the ten-armed goddess. The various Pujas are less and less religious and increasingly take on the aspects of pop happenings. West Bengal symbolises, in an acute form, the main problem in India today—the nature and quality of the revolution that will transform our society from the traditional to the modern.

Possibilities

A N. BOSE

THE unfinished agrarian revolution is the key problem before our country. Inability to recognise the significance of this problem is at the root of the present confusion of thinking regarding what is to be done.

Despite the immense possibility opened up by the recent developments in science and technology, the actual condition of the vast masses of the people in our country is gradually worsening, both relatively as well as absolutely. Prof. Dandekar and Rath have shown that the per capita annual consumption of the bottom 40 per cent of the urban population actually went down from Rs. 96 to Rs. 224 in 1960-61 to Rs. 78 to Rs. 220 in 1967-68; during the same period the differential between the bottom 5 per cent and top 5 per cent increased from 13.2 times to 17.0

Nowhere in India is this widening gap between the technological possibility and the actual reality so starkly manifested as in the State of West Bengal. And what imparts particular poignancy to the condition of this State is the way the would be midwives appear to be behaving. It is the simultaneous existence of these three phenomena together, viz., (i) the gradually worsening actual reality, (ii) the gradually increasing immense technological possibility, and (iii) the near absence of a band of dedicated and skilled mid-wives

who could have helped a safe delivery,—that transforms the problem of West Bengal into a severe crisis.

In terms of the total capital investment in organised industry. or number of workers in registered factories per 100 sq. miles or per 100 of the population, West Bengal is still now the most industrialised State in India. So, let us first of all take up the condition of manufacturing industries in this State, with special reference to its employment aspect. Relevant employment data over time are available only with respect to the industrial units registered under the Factories Act. How the number of these

TABLE I

No. of units and their employment, Registered Factories, West Bengal, 1951-1970.

Year	No. of units	No. of workers (in '000)	Average per annum in- crease * (number)
1951	2,596	652	
1956	3,112	659	+ 1,400
1961	4,310	718	+ 11,800
1965	5,642	880	+ 40,500
1966	5,713	840	-40,000
1967	5,657	832	- 8,000
1968	5,403	817	- 15,000
1969	5,599	. 791	- 26,000
1970	-	809	+ 18,000

registered units, along with their number of workers, increased during the first three plans and then for each of the years 1965 to 1970 is clear from Table I.

The gradually increasing tempo of employment during the period, 1951 to 1965, and the precipitous fall in the post 1965 period may be noted. It may be mentioned that even if the actually realised rate of increase per annum (comp) during 1961-65, continued during the subsequent years 1965-1970, the volume of employment would have been 11.35 lakhs in 1970. The actual employment was 3.26 lakhs less. Instead of an expected increase by 2.55 lakhs during 1965-70, the employment in the registered factory sector fell by 71 thousand.

The peculiar situation in West Bengal may be further clarified if it is compared with the corresponding situation in the rest of India. To facilitate comparison, the registered factory employment data for West Bengal and for the rest of India are presented in Table II in terms of indices with the 1965 employment as base (=100,00).

TABLE II

Indices of registered factory employment, W. Bengal and rest of India, 1951-1970 (1965-100)

Year	West Bengal	Rest of India
1951	74	59
1961	82	84
1965	, 100	100
1966	95 .	102
1967	94	103
1968	93	103 +
1969	90	-
1970	92	. -

It may be clear from Table II that, so far as registered factory employment is concerned, it was a case of slowing down of growth rate for the rest of India; but for West Bengal it was a case of absolute decline in the post 1965 situation. This is the first distinguishing feature of the State of West Bengal.

The pattern of relative stagnation and then a sharp decline in the eco-

TABLE III

in '000 tonnes

Volume of goods handled by the six major Indian ports, 1951-1966

Year		Goods handled by Ports				
	Calcutta	Bombay	Madras	Vizag, Cochin & Kandla	ports	
1951-52 1956-57 1961-62 1965-66	9,736 8,869 9,302 9,848	7,600 12,172 14,548 18,197	2,190 2,500 3,467 4,800	2,988 4,098 N.A. 14,855	22,514 27,639 47,700	
% increase 1951-52 to 1965-66		139.43%	119.18%	397.15%	111.86%	

TABLE IV

Ste	ate	Ratio	in .	increase urbanisa- tion 1961-1971
1.	West Bengal	33.84	Calcutta urban area* and	
_			Durgapur	27.95%
2.	Maharashtra	6.89	Greater Bombay and Nagpur	40.68%
3.	Andhra	4.97	Hyderabad U.A. and	,,,
			Visakhapatnam	33.81%
4.	Tamil Nadu	4.51	Madras and Madurai	38.44%
5.	Mysore	4.34	Bangalore Urban area &	•
	•		Hubli Dharwar	35.09%
6.	Gujarat	3.36	Ahmedabad and Surat	41.20%
7.	Himachal Pradesh	2.62	Simla and Sundarnagore	35.54%
8.	J & K	2.61	Srinagar & Jammu	42.04%
9.	All other	less than	-	,
	States	2		

nomic activity of West Bengal may also be clear from the volume of goods handled by the Calcutta Port during the period 1951-1970. Of the six major ports in our country, viz., Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Vizagapatnam, Cochin and Kandla, the position of Calcutta was far ahead of the others in 1951-52; in that year Calcutta Port handled more than 43 per cent of the goods (in weight) cleared by the six ports together. In 1965-66, that percentage came down to 20.6 per cent. Relevant data are presented in Table III.

During the 14 years, 1951-52 to 1965-66, the amount of goods handled by Calcutta port increased by only 1.15 per cent, the corresponding figure for the five other ports in the rest of India was as

high as 196.23 per cent. And what is more crucial, after 1966-67 there has been a sharp fall in the volume of goods handled by the Calcutta port, and the amount of goods handled in 1969-70 [6.9 million tonnes] was less by 29 per cent compared to that in 1951-52. This is the second distinguishing feature of the State of West Bengal.

Nearly 75 per cent of the registered factory employment in West Bengal is concentrated in a small strip of land in the Calcutta Metropolitan District (CMD) and it occupies less than 1.5 per cent of the total area of West Bengal. And the extent of domination of one city complex in the totality of cities and towns has reached a level in West Bengal without any near parallel in the other States. The ratio between

the population of the largest city complex in each State to that of its second largest city or city complex for the different States is presented in Table IV on the previous page.

It may be seen that the differential for West Bengal [about 34] is nearly five times higher than that in the State with the next highest concentration [Maharashtra]. It may also be noted that the second highest population concentration in the whole of eastern India was the Patna urban area with a population of only 4.9 lakhs or nearly one-fifteenth of that of the Calcutta urban area. This acute concentration of urbanisation is the third distinguishing characteristic of West Bengal.

How the one city domination in West Bengal is retarding urbanisation may be clear from the percentage increase in urbanisation during 1961-1971 presented in the previous table. It may be seen that the figure is lowest for the State of West Bengal. And West Bengal, with the second highest population density (507 per Km compared

perennial water management system which is the basis for introducing modern technology in agriculture. On March 31, 1969, only 2621 villages or 6.8 per cent of the total number of villages in West Bengal were electrified and by the end of 1969, only 1,400 tubewells* or 37 per 1000 villages could be energised in this State. And in 1968-69, of the total electric power consumption in the State (4583.4 million Kwh), the share of irrigation was 17.6 million Kwh or only 0.4 per cent of the total power consumption in the State.

These figures on power development in the most industrialised State in India may be compared with India as a whole. On March 31, 1969, 70 thousand villages out of a total of 560 thousand villages in India, or 12.5 per cent of the total, were electrified; and the number of pumpsets energised came to 10.8 lakhs, or 1930 pumps per 100 villages. And in India as a whole, irrigation claimed 2670 million Kwh out of a total of 40.770 Kwh or 6.5 per cent of the total power consumption in India. The

least 1 lakh units or nearly 15 times more than the actual consumption. And this shows that even in the villages with power connection, only a small part of the land as yet could be brought under irrigation with the help of power. This relative and absolute backwardness of agriculture is the fourth distinguishing feature of West Bengal.

As an outcome of all that has been stated above, it is estimated that the present level of unemployment in West Bengal is about 3 million. This has been estimated on the basis of a labour force participation rate of 95 per cent of male man-power, 30 per cent of female man-power and the actual working force figure (126 lakhs) revealed by the 1971 census. It may be stated that the census working force figure for agriculture [72 lakh] contains sizeable under employment whose full-time unemployment equivalent is estimated at 2.0 million. Thus, if the later estimate is also included, the total figure of unemployment in West Bengal is in the vicinity of 5 million. Of this figure, only about 7.5 lakhs have registered themselves with the employment exchange. Of these 7.5 lakhs, about 2.50 lakh are the educated unemployed.

It may be stated in this connection that the proportion of people in the working force has been consistently going down during the planning decade in West Bengal. The record for India as a whole is not as bad as that in West Bengal. This may be clear from Table VI.

Despite changes in definition by the Census authorities, the trend particularly with regard to the relative position of West Bengal becomes clear from the table above. This continuous decline in the working force participation rate is

TABLE V	_	
	W'. Bengal	India
a) Proportion of villages electrifiedb) No. of pumps energised per 1000 villages	: 6.2%	12.5%
c) Proportion of power consumed in irrigation d) No. of Kwh of power consumed	: 37 : 0.4%	1930 6.5%
for irrigation per village with power	: 6,720	38,000

to 548 for Kerala and 157 for the rest of India), thus, has to live with the lowest rate of increase in urbanisation.

The main contention of what has been stated above is that while in India, excluding West Bengal, the post-1965 situation is characterised by recession-cum-stagnation, that in West Bengal is characterised by an economic slump. An understanding of the nature and extent of this slump may be the key to an understanding of its external manifestations in politics or in violence, etc.

The above points may be further strengthened with reference to the level of rural electrification—the key, in most areas, for developing a contrast has been put in tabular form above. (The data relate to the end of the year 1968-69.)

It may be stated that if power is used for irrigation for three crops per year, the total estimated consumption of an average West Bengal village should have been at

TABLE VI						
	Proportion	of people	in working force			
Area	1951	Year 1961	1971	% decrease 1951-1971		
West Bengal India	34.8 % 39.1 %	33.2% 43.0%	28.4% 33.5%	18.4% 14.3%		

^{*}The figure has now reached 3607

TABLE VII

Per capita dally earning for worker earning less than Rs. 400 per month in West Bengal, 1961-1968.

Items	1961	Year 1965	1966	1967	1968
(a) Average nominal earning (Rs)	4.69	5.99	6.61	7.21	7.69
(b) Consumer price index for working					
class (Cal)	101	128	144	159	171
(c) Real earning (Rs)	4.64	4.68	4.59	4.53	4.50

TABLE VIII

Per capita daily earning of workers earning less than Rs. 400 per month in different States, 1961-1968.

States	Year							
	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
West Bengal	Rs. 4.69	4.79	5.05	5.45	5.99	6.61	7.21	7.69
Maharashtra		6.04	6.12	6.52	7.29	8.17	8.87	9.08
Gujarat	Rs. 5.37	5.46	5.34	5.83	6.69	7.41	8.39	8.39
Madras		4.87	4.78	4.95	6.40	6.51	7.13	7.41
Total India	Rs. 4.79	5.01	5.11	5.42	6.16	6.70	7.24	7.73

the fifth distinguishing characteristic of West Bengal.

Along with this increase in the number of dependents per worker, the real income of even the organised sector of industrial workers has been going down particularly during the last few years. The pattern with regard to the workers in registered factories and earning less than Rs. 400 per month may be clear from Table VII.

It may be mentioned that, contrary to prevalent belief, wage rates in West Bengal are substantially lower than those in other relatively industrialised States. This may be clear from Table VIII.

Thus, the wage level in West Bengal is not only lower than that in Maharashtra and Gujarat but also compared to India as a whole. Moreover, if the above data can be deflated by the respective consumer price indices, it may be shown that the real wage level in West Bengal (Rs. 4.50) in 1968 was lower than even that of Tamil Nadu (Rs. 4.91). Relatively low level of wage is, then, the sixth distinguishing characteristic of West Bengal.

Not only has the real wage per worker been consistently going down in West Bengal since 1965, the total real wage bill went down from Rs. 972 million in 1965 to Rs. 900 million in 1968 or by 7.4 per cent; the corresponding fall for the rest of India was by 6.2 per cent

The last point that may be mentioned in this section is the fantastic /increase in the proportion of landless agricultural labour during the last decade. In 1961, of the total number of peasants, composed of owner cultivators, share croppers and agricultural labourers, 28.4 per cent were pure agri-

cultural labourers in West Bengal. The corresponding proportion in 1971 has become as high as 44.8 per cent compared to 37 per cent for India as a whole. And, from this it may easily be surmised that despite various legislations on land reform, and even of the peasant movement for land distribution, the concentration of land ownership and proletarianisation of peasants went on at a rapid pace during the last decade. A relatively higher level of landless agricultural labour is the seventh distinguishing characteristic of West Bengal.

Even a cursory look at the already available resources, along with the technological possibility of augmenting those resources, may convince any one that the problems mentioned above are certainly not beyond our capacity to solve.

In the manufacturing sector, the physical capacity exists to produce at least double the current production level. A study by the Reserve Bank of India revealed that even in the all-India level, production could be increased by at least 77 per cent in 1967 simply by multiple-shift-working in the existing units. This higher income employment would have and had pushed up, more than proportionately, the rate of investment and the rate of growth. This must be far more true in West Bengal where the level of idle capacity is far higher than at the all-India level. This can be made clear with an example from the wagon manufacturing industry presented in Table IX.

Thus, compared to the production in 1964-65, the actual level in 1967-68 was only 41 per cent for West Bengal. The same for Maha-

TABLE IX

	No. o	f railways	wagons	built in differe	ent States	
Period		West Bengal	Maha- rashtra	U.P.	Other States	Total
1964-65	***************************************	20,758	2.887	1,552	9,346	34,543
1965-66		18,521	2,230	1,852	9,902	33,505
1966-67		11,264	2,270	1,015	6,658	21,207
1967-68		8,585	2,038	1,317	5,693	17,633

rashtra, U.P. and other States were 71 per cent, 85 per cent and 61 per cent respectively. It may not, therefore, be unrealistic to assume that in addition to the present about 9 lakh employees, about 6 lakh new employment can be generated in the organised manufacturing sector in West Bengal by utilising fully the existing capacity, may be, with some diversification in certain branches.

The existing net cultivated area in West Bengal is 136 lakh acres. Of these, only in 8 lakh acres is there perennial irrigation, and of the remaining 28 lakh acres under irrigation, it is available mostly during the rainy season. Compared to the present level of productivity of less than 5 quintals per acre for rice or wheat and less than 6 quintals per acre for jute, it is technologically possible,—provided there is assured perennial irrigation and other essential inputs like HYV Seed, fertiliser, etc.,—not only to increase the yield to 10-13 quintals per acre for wheat and rice and to 9 quintals for jute, but also to have 2-3 crops per year compared to the present level of only 1.35 crops per year. Under the combined effect of better yield per crop and increased number of crops per year, it may not be unrealistic to plan for increasing income from the primary sector from the present level of Rs. 12,500 raillion to Rs. 25,000 million by 1981-82. It presupposes a growth rate of production of 7.2 per cent per annum. And it may be demonstrated that if the multi-crop index can be increased from 1.3 to 2.0, it will generate additional full time employment for 1.8 million people in agriculture making full time employment in agriculture rise from 5.2 million in 1971 to 7.0 million in 1981, denoting a growth rate of employment of 3 per cent per year (comp).

The agricultural modernization visualised above will solve the crucial difficulties in the way of using fully the already existing manufacturing capacity and to go ahead with an accelerated rate of new investments. Supply of agricultural raw material for industry can be made abundant at a rela-

tively lower price, removing one of the main bottlenecks for industrial development. Similarly, it will be possible to supply adequate amount of food at a relatively cheaper price to the urban area in general and to the industrial workers in particular. This will remove one of the main causes of labour unrest and labour-management disputes, leading to a better use of our productive forces. Moreover, by eliminating the need to import food, it will be easier to import industrial raw materials, spares, machines, etc., the lack of which is one of the main causes of the present sluggish industrial develop-

The most important effect will, however, be in terms of a fantastic increase in the size of the home market. It may be mentioned that in our country the value of industrial inputs into agriculture constitutes less than 2 per cent of the total value of the agricultural output. The corresponding share in the industrially advanced countries is in the neighbourhood of 25 to 30 per cent. This gives an indication of the vast market that can be developed in the process of modernising our agriculture, and thus remove by far the biggest bottleneck in our industrial development.

At this point it is, however, necessary to point out that to realise in practice the above technological possibilities, it will be essential to change basically the present concentration of land ownership and the various institutions like rack renting, usury or speculative commerce that arise from this foundation. So long as such anti-productive institutions, which assure a rate of return of well over 100 per cent per year remain, channelising savings into productive investment for agricultural modernization will require guaranteeing a similar, if not higher, rate of return. It will make the results of modernization very costly to the society. And, moreover, it will remain confined to the upper 10 to 20 per cent of families owning 60 to 70 per cent of the land. Thus, at best, it may lead to a very limited and costly modernization which will at the same time further aggravate the differential between a time fraction of the society at the top and the vast majority at the bottom.

Thus, the primary need for changing the present agrarian system arises not because it is a bad distributor, but because it is a bad producer. The main point is that with the present system intact it will not be possible either to achieve universal modernization in the field of enthusiastic participation of the vast masses of the peasantry in the production process. This has become particularly important now because modern agricultural technology can transform even 2 to 3 acre plots into an economically viable size. And, despite land shortage, we do have enough land even in West Bengal to provide each peasant family with a 2-3 acres plot. Unlike the past when the dream of the peasants to own a small plot of land could be dubbed as reactionary from the point of view of technological progress, to-day a fulfilment of that dream leading to an equitable dis-tribution of land has become a positive tool for putting into practice the current technological achievements. Equity in distribution has now become a tool for efficiency in production.

The present crisis in West Bengal is symbolised in almost mass cynicism and desperation arising basically from a lack of hope. It is not the problem of unemployment or low income that is responsible for the lack of hope—it is a total lack of realisation of what is possible that is at the root of the present cynicism. In the pre-1947 days, the conviction that freedom would solve all problèms pushed away all cynicisms from our mind despite the far worse conditions then prevailing in our country. Today only a firm realisation of what is possible, by utilising the resources we already have with the help of modern technology, can dispel our gloom and stop the cynical fight of all against all, and make us combine (that will itself put an end to the crisis) to achieve in practice what big things are really possible for the great masses of our people.

The conflicts

AMLAN DATTA

WEST Bengal provides a striking example of conflict between consciousness and social existence. It is arguable that the difference here with the rest of India is one of degree. But, it is a difference that matters. It even holds a clue to a more general understanding of social evolution. A consciousness determined by social existence is a kind of norm, an equilibrium position, towards which society tends to move, but which it possibly never attains. And the path by which it moves depends on the nature of the initial disequilibrium. In some cases, the movement thus generated progressively reduces the original imbalance; but in other cases, an existing disequilibrium produces more disequilibrium.

The nineteenth-century renaissance in India expressed certain ideas which did not grow out of the natural evolution of our society. It was the result of the impact on our traditional society of ideas concerning liberty, equality and progress which came from abroad. The leaders of our renaissance attempted to base their new conception of

ethics on more ancient foundations: for instance, Rammohan looked back to the Upanishads and Ranade to the religious movement in Maharashtra in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was natural and, to a certain extent, proper. But there was a deep gulf between the old and the new. Our ethic had been formed within the matrix of the joint family. Individualism and an accent on radical doubt gave the West a new conception of liberty, of justice, of love in practice and of the function of reason. The conquests of science and technology produced there an idea of progress such as did not exist here.

These ideas had a profound influence on the consciousness of the leaders of our nineteenth-century renaissance. There is a sense in which Bentham and Rammohan belonged to the same intellectual fraternity. But despite the introduction of English education in India, which in any case reached an infinitesimally small section of the local population, and the construction of railways which linked up a few important towns and cities, the

mode of social existence changed comparatively little under the impact of the new ideas.

W hile this lack of adjustment was felt throughout the country, there were important differences in its form and intensity and, therefore, in its consequences in different regions. In West Bengal, the maladjustment appeared in what was perhaps its sharpest form. There are several reasons for this, some of which are worth noting briefly at this stage. It is not simply that Calcutta and the neighbouring region were exposed to English education longer than most other parts of the Indian subcontinent. Bengal had been already for many centuries on the periphery of an orthodox culture, far removed from the centre and, therefore, more hospitable to heterodox ideas. It should not be surprising if the western impact was psychologically more unsettling among the newly educated middle class in Bengal than it was in other parts of India.

Calcutta was the principal centre of the nineteenth-century Bengali renaissance. In course of time it became the largest city of India. Simultaneously, the contrast between the city and the surrounding rural regions widened. This became a special factor aggravating the economic and social disequilibrium not only in Bengal, but in the whole of the eastern region of India. The city attracted talents and material resources from a vast hinterland. It failed to establish with the countryside the creative process of circulation of wealth and ideas by which an advanced centre helps the development of a whole region. Again, something similar was to be found in other parts of India, but nowhere perhaps in such an acute form as in the eastern region. Nowhere else did a single city along with its industrial satellites dominate an impoverished countryside completely.

Even from the early days of the Calcutta-centred renaissance, the contrast between the city and the country was reflected in a schism within the psyche of the leaders of the new enlightenment. Keshab-

chandra Sen (1938-84) who began by declaring his faith in 'absolute freedom of individual conscience from the bondage of social customs and conventions' ended up by giving his daughter in marriage to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar when the girl was under fourteen. The contrast between the temper of the Bengali radicals and the Prarthana Samaj of Bombay, which Keshab Sen helped to establish, is worth The Prarthana Samaj, noting. particularly under the leadership of Ranade (1842-1901) who was a contemporary of Sen, was less interested in radical postures on theological questions, but more honestly devoted to social reform. Bengal, with her more unorthodox tradition. was psychologically drawn towards extreme ideological professions. But in the actual practice of life, she remained largely determined by the backwardness of the major part of the Bengali economy and society.

What do people do when their intellectual convictions outrun their capacity for practical realisation? In Bengal the outcome has been a combination of social immobilism with political revolutionism. The wealth accumulated in Calcutta has not flowed out and got productively invested in the country. Instead, revolutionaries have sprung up from the ranks of a decadent aristocracy and of a middle class squeezed within the confines of an overgrown city. Extremist ideology meets here a special psychological need. It provides a dazzling vision, a utopia, besides which all programmes of constructive work look pale, and so elevates an incapacity to carry through these programmes to the likeness of a higher wisdom.

Between 1966 and 1971, West Bengal colleges, particularly in Calcutta, were engulfed in an unprecendented storm of student rebellion. The revolt started in Presidency College. In recent years, Calcutta colleges have been drawing an increasing number of students from the less urbanised districts. Thus, the confrontation between the urban élite and their children, on the one hand, and their country cousins, on the other, has taken a new form. In the schools there is a kind of institutional separation of children belonging to diverse social strata. But in the leading colleges of Calcutta they are thrown together. This has been particularly true of Presidency College, and there the rebellion sparked off. The Calcutta 'Naxals' hate the culture of the city: they have shown a ferocious energy in tearing down pictures and breaking images of the leaders of the Bengali renaissance, such as Asutosh, Vidyasagar, Vivekananda and Rabindranath.

This does not mean, however, that the same young people are not at the same time strongly attracted by this culture and the privileged positions of the society of which it is a part. Some of the young 'Naxals' who burnt with hatred till yesterday against the 'hypocrisy' of their elders have already returned to practical conformism and are today members of the Indian Administrative Service, officers of the State Bank of India or teachers in those educational institutions which they once resolved to pull down.

There is a remarkable ambivalence in the attitude of the youth in West Bengal towards the older generation. Bengali young people still take the dust off the feet of their elders and teachers, a pretty uncommon ritual in the northwestern region of India. The same young people have also exhibited in recent years an astounding capacity for violent, hysterical and sometimes calculatedly obscene outbursts against their teachers. There is no middle path. It is as rare for the young to try and reason with their elders as it is for the elders to welcome a reasoned dialogue. No such tradition exists as yet. There is much that is extremely wrong with the educational system of the country. Teachers accept it cynically; students either submit or revolt. But there is no genuine attempt to change the system. The issues on which student unions or teachers' associations launch the most fiercely fought movements are singularly unrelated to any programme for educational reconstruction.

It is much the same in other spheres of life. In recent years a

new class of improvement-minded farmers has come up in some parts of India. West Bengal has produced many exponents of an agrarian revolution but few progressive far-mers. A popular thesis in this region is that no genuine development is possible within the framework of the present Constitution of India. The fact that India has already progressed far in the direction of self-sufficiency in food, and that some parts of the country have moved ahead fairly rapidly, will make no impression on the propounders of that thesis. What has been achieved in Punjab and Gujarat, Maharashtra or Tamilnadu, is less than nothing in comparison with the utopia which the revolutionaries hope to achieve by other means. In any case, there is no denying the imperfections of the green revolution. And so West Bengal lags behind dreaming of utopia, and other parts of India move ahead.

There can be no doubt that the partition of India added enormously to the problems of this very densely populated State in the eastern region of India. It will be a mistake to assess the magnitude of the burden on the State in terms of the sheer number of refugees pouring into West Bengal since the partition. One has also to take into account the psychology of a rootless population of that size. Here was a population which was natur-. ally nostalgic and prone to look back to a dreamy past which it could neither retrieve nor again banish from its mind. Its material insecurity and the quality of its despair made it more readily responsive to revolutionary appeals than what a settled population would normally be.

In many respects, the present moment is the best that West Bengal has had for many years to try to come out of its continuing crisis. For one thing, Bangla Desh is a new factor in the situation. We shall have a little more to say on this subject later. But there is one point which we might as well note right now. Since the partition of 1947, West Bengal has suffered deeply from a sense of injustice done to her. The events of

December 1971 have gone a long way to help restore a sense of justice. This provides a healthier psychological climate for adopting a programme of development and enlisting public cooperation for it.

Secondly, there is today a new mood of disenchantment with chronic disorder. West Bengal has had no stable government for the last five years. Now, at least, a party seems to have emerged which can provide this State with some kind of political stability. It is true that the new Congress in West Bengal has its problems. Its leadership is still weak. But there is now at least the opportunity to begin work. For the rest, one has to hope that leaders will be created in the process of work.

t has long been a principal grievance of West Bengal that the State has not received adequate assistance from the Centre. prospects of such assistance are brighter today than they were in the past. There is one point which needs to be stressed in this connection. The effectiveness of central aid will depend both on the quantum of such aid and on the manner of its use. We have spoken above of the extremely unbalanced development of the city and the country in the eastern region of India. If it is true that the Centre has neglected Calcutta, it is equally true that Calcutta has all along neglected the outlying districts of the

The problem of Calcutta cannot be solved simply by more investment in the city itself and its neighbourhood. The battle for Calcutta has to be fought and won in the impoverished countryside -stretching up to the eastern region of Uttar Pradesh. Calcutta needs special treatment. But a programme for metropolitan development has to be made an integral part of a more comprehensive plan for the development of the entire eastern region. There can be no cure for unemployment and unrest in Calcutta without there being fuller employment in the hinterland of this great city.

ense of injustice Finally, the development of West The events of Bengal needs to be integrated with

the reconstruction of Bangla Desh. Indeed, we have to go beyond and include for certain purposes the valley of Brahmaputra within the scope of this larger development plan. Here we will do no more than comment briefly on the relevance of Bangla Desh. emergence of a friendly and independent Bangla Desh has profoundly important implications for the economic as well as cultural progress of West Bengal. There is a natural complementarity between the economies of the two Bengals. It has been one of the main grievances of the leaders of the Awami League that East Bengal was forced to buy from and sell in Pakistan what could have been more profitably exchanged with the neighbouring region of India, particularly West Bengal. Although the boundaries between the two Bengals remain and must be respected, the emergence of Bangla Desh as a friendly neighbour will help unify the two markets to a much greater extent than was possible before. In some ways, we are likely to have exaggerated expectations at this stage. These will have to be curbed. For instance, it will be an error to chalk out the future of the jute industry in West Bengal on the premiss of Bangla Desh acting as a steady supplier of raw jute.

Lt may well be that Bangla Desh will in the next few years deliver the coup de grâce to West Bengal's ailing jute industry. This is only one instance of many structural readjustments which will have to be accepted as the two economies come closer together. But these readjustments can be expected to be beneficial to both these economies in the long run. It should be possible in the coming years to secure for this whole region a more adequate 'infrastructure' for economic development, including transport. hydro-electric projects, irrigation, drainage and flood control, than would have been possible under the previously existing political condi-Necessary readjustments being effected, industries in the two Bengals, and indeed in the whole eastern region of the subcontinent, should be able to reap the economies of production for a larger market.

For West Bengal, the cultural significance of the emergence of Bangla Desh is even deeper than its purely economic one. A remarkable thing about the struggle for independence in East Bengal was the place that Rabindranath and Nazrul came to occupy in it. The democratic and secular movement led by Mujib takes pride in its affiliation with that earlier Bengali renaissance of which Tagore was a central figure. But there are obvious differences between the movements. The earlier renaissance was confined almost exclusively to the Hindu middle class. The new movement in Bangla Desh is bound to develop in course of time an accent and an idiom determined by the soil of East Bengal and the composition of its population.

There is also a second difference. The leaders of the movement in Bangla Desh are closer to the common people than the nineteenthcentury Bengali renaissance was in its own time. The gulf between Calcutta and the country has always been wider than that between the more moderate-sized towns and villages of East Bengal. Moreover, the cultural upsurge in Bangla Desh can now be expected to merge and mingle with a spurt of nationbuilding activity, while the Bengali renaissance had to grow over a long period in dissociation from political power and positive responsibility for economic develop-

It is, therefore, possible that the secular movement in its rebirth in Bangla Desh in this now historical context will come to acquire a practical content such as the earlier renaissance lacked. If so, this in turn will have certain consequences for West Bengal. Thus Bangla Desh may yet repay its debts to the Bengali renaissance by impregnating it with new practical possibilities in the coming decade. To say this is, of course, to hope for the best. For there is also the other possibility of West Bengal infecting Bangla Desh with its revolutionary utopianism and thus pushing it towards disaster.

Emergency operation

PANNALAL DASGUPTA

THE vast hinterland of Calcutta consists of not only rural West Bengal, but the whole of eastern India—eastern U.P., Bihar, Orissa, Eastern M.P., Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. We can get a picture of the still semi-colonial role of this metropolis from an incisive study done by Dr. A. N. Bose of the C.M.P.O. (Cotinuing semi-colonial character—the basic problem of the Indian Metropolis, Indian Journal of the Regional Science, Vol. III, No. 1, 1971). The British colonial system of exploitation once created this city.

There is a basic difference between colonial relations and typical industrial capitalist relations. In the former, the surplus extracted is pumped out of the colony and is not used, in the main, for addition

to its production capacity; in the latter, the surplus extracted is retained within the area and is used for increasing the productive capacity of the country. In consequence, in the former, over-all labour productivity remains stagnant or even goes down, generating the vicious circle of low incomes leading to low or negative investment (despite higher surplus), which in its turn, perpetuates or even lowers further already low incomes. In the latter, however, labour productivity goes up and in that process generates, what may be called, a virtual circle of high incomes leading to high investment, which in its turn leads further to higher income. And, thus, while in the former, the basic problem is how to tackle the appalling poverty, in the latter it is what to do with increasing afflu-

The British colonial exploitation of India took three basic forms in the three successive stages of the development of British capitalism, viz., mercantile capitalism, industrial capitalism and, lastly, monopoly capitalism. Despite the change in form, the essence of the relation between Britain and India was always the same, viz., the draining of Indian wealth away from India.

But, after independence, Britain could no longer exercise dominant control, politically or economically, over our country. The relationship between Calcutta and her vast hinterland with the lowest level of urbanisation still remains semicolonial. The economic condition of the rural areas remains, in the main, what it was in the British colonial days:

'In 1950-51, the per-capita urban income in India (Rs. 424) was 83% higher than that of rural income (Rs. 232). And during the next ten years, the per-capita urban income, at 1951-52 prices, increased by 14% to reach Rs. 486, while the same for the rural areas decreased by 10% to become Rs. 209. As a result, the per-capita urban income in 1960-61 was substantially more than double (133% higher) the corresponding rural income. It has further been estimated that while the per-capita income, in 1952-53 prices, has increased in the non-

agricultural sector from Rs. 438 in 1951 to Rs. 527 in 1968-69 (i.e. by 20%), the same in the agricultural sector has declined from Rs. 190 in 1951 to Rs. 181, in 1968-69. The former in 1968-69 was thus 2.86 times the latter'. (Ibid. P. 38.).

Thus, the basic task before the country today is to change radically the present semi-colonial character of its metropolis and turn it into a great lever to raise the low level of urbanisation of its vast rural hinterland by way of providing an infrastructure to modernise agriculture, the basic industry or the basic foundation of all industries. The problem of the hinterland is its basically backward agriculture. West Bengal's need for power, steel and iron, fertilizer and insecticides, roads and transport, machineries for agriculture, etc., has not yet been given proper, serious attention.

Although it is claimed that 23 per cent of the cultivable land has been brought under irrigation, it should be remembered that this irrigation brought by three river valley projects (Damodar, Mayurakshi and Kangsabati rivers) is only supplemental and not perennial. It only serves as a stand-by system to supplement the rains when they fail in the Kharif season. All the year round, irrigation has reached not more than 3 per cent by way of deep and shallow tube wells energised by electric and oil engines. Only 5 per cent of the villages have so far been electrified. Electrically operated tube wells are only about 3000 whereas Tamil Nadu has over two lakhs of them. Haryana has all her villages electrified and a crash programme for pucca roads for all the villages has also been taken up. The picture of rural electrification in eastern India is yet absolutely dark. The use of fertilizers, tractors, tillers, etc., is also negligible.

What is important here is to notice the utter incapability of Calcutta, with her Asansole-Durgapur complexes of industries, to provide the above infrastructure to this rural hinterland. It has not saved the industries of the metropolis as well of those of the Asansole-Durgapur areas. Basically

our agriculture is not served by the so-called industries of the towns. As such, what our agriculture needs is not supplied by our industries and our industries produce the things which have no market in the countryside. Here lies the basic hiatus between our industry and agriculture from which all the economic and political maladies flow.

Thus, any effort today to rejuvenate the ailing metropolis by some artificial respiration by way of spending hundreds of crores of rupees within the metropolis or even within the C.M.D. without basically changing its semi-colonial character, without reorganising it as a powerful lever to modernise its hinterland, ultimately will not help the metropolis. We have got to see that scarce capital resources are spent for generating income and not for merely consuming it, as and when received by loans. After all, the loans received for developing Calcutta have got to be repaid with interest. Money spent on the greater 'livability' of Calcutta, on better water-supply, drainage, removal of garbage, housing, transportahowever necessary, tion, etc., are not productive of wealth. They will not banish poverty, but will attract more uprooted and poverty-driven people from the great hinterland, viz., eastern U.P., Bihar, eastern M.P., Orissa, Assam, Tripura and rural Bengal, making it all the more difficult for Calcutta to manage the ever increasing influx of people from outside.

Therefore, first of all, the basic approach should be clear.

In formulating a long term economic plan with its yearly break up, the central focus should be to initiate such development measures as would solve the most pressing economic problems of today, and then to maintain such development over the long run so that they lead to a substantial increase in per capita real income with a more equitable distribution, both between different strata of the population as well as between different areas or regions.

The paramount problem before us is the rising unemployment, and its present magnitude is in the order of 4.5 millions (only in West Bengal), assuming that the whole of the adult male man-power (15-59 years) and 40 per cent of the adult females should be in the labour force. The inability to use a gradually increasing proportion of our man-power has been the basic malady of our past planning efforts, and its elimination should, therefore, constitute the key to the proposed 'Operation West Bengal'.

Let us, then, examine the order of magnitude of the employment potential, firstly, in directly productive activity, i.e., in agriculture and in manufacture and construction industries and, secondly, in the servicing sector primarily needed to support, and therefore dependent upon, the directly productive activity.

Compared to the net cultivated area of 136 lakh acres in West Bengal, the gross cultivated area is 184 lakhs. Thus, the average number of crops per year is only 184/ 136 or 1.36. Average labour requirement per acre is about 70 man-days and so 184 lakh acres provide employment for 128.80 lakh man-days Assuming that 250 man-days of work per year connotes full employment, it means full employment for about 52 lakh persons. Actual employment in agriculture being 72 lakhs, they are underemployed to the extent of 72-52 or 28 per cent. This is apart from that part of the rural labour force which in any case does not get any scope for participating in productive activity.

Now, if the gross cultivated area can be increased by 100 lakh acres. thereby increasing the number of crops per acre to 284/136 or by nearly 2 crops per year, the full employment equivalent of the new employment generation will be of the order of 100 lakh X 70/250 or 28 lakhs. The same on the basis of 2.5 crops per year will be 43 lakhs. This shows that 2 crops per year can not only totally eliminate the present level of unemployment in the rural sector, but can also create new employment.

It is known that if irrigation and drainage can be assured, and if that is supplemented by high yielding short duration seeds, fertilizers and insecticides, it is even possible to raise three crops per year. Hence, an immediate target for 2 crops per year, which may subsequently be raised to 2.5 or more, is certainly not unrealistic. We shall, however, have to make detailed planning studies to identify the areas as well as the quantum and quality of inputs required for this moderniza-of agriculture.

In terms of gross magnitude, it may be stated that on the basis of maximum simultaneous demand of 3 KW of power per village (360 acres per village on the average including home-steads and fields) for irrigation and diversity factors of 1.2, new power generation to the order of 1460 M.W. will be needed for agriculture alone. If we take into account house-hold demand and the demand for dispersed servicing and industrial towns, power generation will have to be further enhanced by at least 750 M.W. as calculated by the C.M.P.O., on the basis of 0.5 K.W. per worker for 5 lakhs industrial workers in 500 dispersed centres and 15 K.W. per village for domestic consumption.

The main cost of modernization of agriculture is the huge overhead cost of generating power and for providing the distribution system which may be Rs. 1 lakh per village, which means nearly Rs. 384 crores for all the 38,465 villages of West Bengal. The cost per acre will depend upon the extent of the adoption of modern practice. Under prevailing socio-economic conditions, only 20 per cent of the rural families owning 60 per cent of the total land, may be in a position to adopt modern practices. That is also doubtful because of the extreme fragmentation of land holdings; not even the rich farmers' holdings are more than 2 acres in a compact area, whereas the command area for irrigation of a 5 H.P. shallow tube-well may be 5 to 7 acres.

Thus, this situation prevents the utilisation of modern infrastructures on a wide scale. Here we need radical land reforms to consolidate land holdings. Pending such legislation, some compulsions and inducement can help the farmers to form into

groups and own and operate such tube-wells and other agricultural machineries and electricity jointly important to note here is that universal modernization of agriculture covering all lands and all farmers in the State will not only drastically reduce the cost of electricity and increase productive employment, it will also ensure that the benefit of modernization does not accrue only to the top 20 per cent which would further accentuate the socio-economic-cum-political tension, but to all the rural families ensuring real mass participation in development activity which is, perhaps, by far the biggest development asset in an underdeveloped country.

The order of magnitude for demand for engineering goods will be Rs. 40,000 per village (as estimated by C.M.P.O.). Thus, if even 4000 villages are supplied with pump sets and tube-wells per year, the total annual demand for these goods will be only Rs. 16 crores. This is apart from the demand that will arise due to electrification.

The fertilizer need per acre is Rs. 120. For a gross cultivated area of 284 lakh acres (i.e., on an average of a little over 2 crops per year) the annual fertilizer need will be Rs. 340 crores. This means so many fertilizer factories for this State alone. Similar estimates may be made for the need for insecticides and pesticides, etc. It may be mentioned here that the additional income per rupee of additional modern inputs, if applied properly, may be about Rs. 3. It should not then be financially difficult or unwise to advance loans from nationalised banks for applying modern inputs, provided the infrastructures, other specially water management, are already there.

Pending the completion of the medium term project for the modernization of our entire agriculture, which may take over 3 years, immediate attention should be paid to the introduction of better cropping patterns, ensuring double cropping with existing resources. This may further be strengthened if the already available irrigation sources are properly utilised and

if arrangements may be made for conserving water reservoirs and low cost minor irrigation facilities.

Minor irrigation projects have immense scope in West Bengal where sources of water, underground and surface, are many indeed. Here, proper drainage is a difficult problem more much than draught, for which radical steps should be taken for floodcontrol. Lakhs of neglected and silted-up tanks can be renovated and properly maintained. If necessary, the State can take over these tanks for some period by an ordinance in order to do away with the obstacles generally put up by their owners, who are many and some of whom may not agree to improve the tanks on their own.

A thorough study of the irrigation potential of the State, district by district, should be made. Evaluation of the existing river valley projects (D.V.C., Kangsabati and Mayurakshi) have got to be made and their performances improved and defects corrected. The Teesta Mahananda river valley scheme should be immediately taken in hand. North Bengal should be given proper attention and duly linked with the rest of the State by railways and more all-weather roads. The Hinglo river project in Birbhum should be completed in 3 years.

All test relief, gratuitous relief and a crash programme for rural employment schemes should be coordinated and a Rural Work-Force be organised to help build the roads, minor irrigation projects, field-channels to utilise canal waters economically, level lands, etc., and also for rural house-building and drainage schemes.

Compared to the volume of unemployment in rural areas or amongst the unskilled employment seekers, the volume amongst the urban educated is insignificant. Unlike the others, most of the educated unemployed (matriculates and above) are registered with the Employment Exchange and their total number is 2 lakhs or only 4.4 per cent of the total unemployed in West Bengal. Despite the relative insignificance in terms of volume,

the educated unemployed constitute one of the most serious problems and at the same time a very important asset for national development. It is these educated unemployed who can be made one of the most essential tools for initiating and maintaining a far heightened process of development visualised above.

We shall be needing preparation and implementation of specific irrigation and drainage schemes, and rural electrification schemes; schemes for imparting modern scientific education required for agricultural modernisation as also illiteracy from the scheme for setting eradicating society; a up health servicing and industrial centres; schemes for diversification of the existing industries and for developing new ones, Servicing centres with stores and workshops to supply essential inputs, repair and maintenance services, extending loans and arranging for marketing and storage of surplus products will absorb a lot of the young unemployed. These centres may not be more than 5 miles away from any particular settlement and the number of such centres will be about 450 as determined by the existing settlement.

And, only in the background of this all round need can we realise how important a national asset these educated unemployed may become.

Modernization of agriculture, or this rebuilding of the rural hinterland will not only solve the problems of our vast rural areas, but will also create the most basic precondition for solving the problems of our urban areas, particularly of its metropolis. By providing adequate raw materials and food, and by offering a huge market for industrial goods, modernised agriculture will act as a great development booster for manufacturing industries, the life-line of the urban economy.

And, again, of necessity, this modernised agriculture will have to be girdled by a hierarchy of new and existing growth-centres of services and industry and this will absorb the gradually increasing population. Only then will it be

possible to put a stop to the increasing population pressure on the metropolis as well as in the Asansole-Durgapur complexes, which now frustrates all attempts to increase the per-capita availability of water, housing, transport and other physical amenities. Similar modernization of the agricultural programme for Bihar, eastern U.P., Orissa, Assam, etc., will boost up their real growth, absorbing their own unemployed, and the rush to Calcutta for jobs will to that extent decrease.

As agricultural modernization will create the precondition for the rapid development of the manufacturing industry, similarly, for initiating and maintaining agricultural modernization it will be necessary to have a far bigger and more diversified industrial development. And, agricultural development and industrial development must be conceived basically as complementary to each other, rather than as competitors for scarce capital allocation.

The most difficult question is, then, to find out the proper political authority and sanction and the machinery to formulate and implement a time-bound emergency eco-nomic programme. It appears that all permutations and combinations of political parties in West Bengal could not evolve any democratic authority which could work within the Constitution. Fresh elections in the near future will not change the picture. Failure of the demo-cratic functioning of the polity, derailed economy, mounting unemployment and discontent thereof, complete demoralisation of the administration, collapse of the law and order situation, failure of the political parties, and all-round col-lapse of confidence, extraordinary emergency measures for a specific period of time is perhaps the only way to carry out an 'Operation West Bengal' programme as outlined above. An Emergency should be declared for three years, even by amending the Constitution, during which period there should be no election and the parties and the people should be clearly made aware of this.

An Economic Commission from the Centre, sanctioned by the Par-

liament and the President should immediately be set up and the Commission should place itself in Calcutta, examine, study, determine and decide the work to be done in this period of emergency. This Emergency Economic Commission should set up a permanent State planning unit for West Bengal and also planning cells for each district by suitable persons. The clearly defined targeted tasks should be placed before the people who would then know what exactly was going to be done for West Bengal within this period and how it would help them in terms of employment, development, price control and other amenities. Every district should have a development officer with the same rank and authority of the District Magistrate, as is the practise in Maharashtra and elsewhere, who would look after development and nothing else.

The effective implementation of the 'Operation West Bengal' programme should be protected from Courts' interference by way of injunction, etc. It should also be free from the impediments usually put up by the finance department in getting the approved schemes finally sanctioned by them. With the existing system of budgetary control by the finance department, no scheme can be carried out with the requisite speed necessary to impact the economy. The Rule of Émergency is perhaps more necessary for the protection of the operation project from the above two 'legal' impediments, if not for any thing else.

It should be a Rule of the Programme-Operation West Bengal -not the rule of any particular person or party. That should be the guiding spirit, which might enthuse the people and bring back their confidence. An authoritarian rule for some time appears inevitable in the circumstances, made all the more grave by the Bangla Desh situation imposing ominous consequences for eastern India, and the law and order situation in West Bengal, where democratic civil liberty and an atmosphere for tolerance simply do not exist. Already the Jack-boot of the extraordinary mobilisation of the army, the C.R.P., the B.S.F., and a host of other armed personnel is being severely felt by the people.

In the absence of any real emergency economic programme, all these appear as an army of occupation with all its cruel and blind oppressive measures. A benign authoritarian rule for some time with a clearly defined economic programme under an intelligent and imaginative democratic Centre at Delhi need not be unpopular, if some popular steps are immediately taken to remove long standing grievances.

For example, transport and communication can be the first target for this Operation. Trains must run in time, over-head electric lines must be protected from theft, more buses and trams should be on the road and these be run under the direct supervision of the army. This one step would remove many irritations of office-goers and workers in reaching their destination of work and back home in time and in reasonable comfort. This will at once help bring back discipline. Another such measure that can have an immediate impact is to provide rice to bonafide ration card holders (within stated income brackets) at Rs. 1 per kg as something like this was done in Madras. Here the areas to be taken should include 1) C.M.D. 2) Asansole-Durgapur and the adjoining mining areas, 3) Siliguri and the tea gardens, 4) Haldia, 5) Kharagpur. This is sure to bring back confidence among the employees and the workers. More such popular steps can be thought of and given effect to without much expense to make this authoritarian rule popular and ease the situation to a great extent.

If the people and their political parties can be shown what are their actual requirements and how to fulfil them priority-wise, much of the present blind struggles will disappear. The present situation of chaos and confusion and blind strife emanated more from a lack of understanding of the situation and the way out than from any basic insincerity of the parties, Right or Left. Operation West Bengal could return the polity and the economy of the State along the correct rails again for effective democratic functioning in the future.

A restless quest

B. K. ROY BURMAN

I AM a Bengali intellectual' grinned a Russian young man, introducing himself to me in Leningrad.

I was surprised, but I could read his face. He was not speaking for effect. He was sincere.

'I was born and brought up in Leningrad' he said, 'perhaps you do not realise now natural it is for me to place myself in Calcutta.

'Both Leningrad and Calcutta were established at the same time, towards the beginning of the eighteenth century.

'Leningrad was the capital of the Imperial Tsars; and Calcutta was the capital of the British empire in India.

'Both were cities of vision and action. The messages of India's renaissance and Indian nationalism emanated from Calcutta. Similarly, the fight against exploitation of the toiling masses in Russia crystallised in Leningrad.

'But, both have been the victims of their success. When Indian nationalism fondly fostered by Calcutta, became a strong force, the capital of the country shifted to Delhi and perhaps Calcutta has not forgiven Delhi. Similarly, when the spark of socialist revolution, lit by Leningrad revolutionaries, reduced to ash the edifice of Tsarist

Imperial might, the capital was shifted to Moscow.

'Perhaps there are good geographical and political reasons for the shifts. I do not question them. But it would be less than human if a son of Calcutta and a son of Leningrad do not feel that something has eluded them.

'Even if space and race have divided Calcutta and Leningrad, they have been attuned to the same chords of history.'

It struck me that much of what the Russian friend had said, was true; but then there was much which would not go easily with me. For instance, could I say without being banal that I was a son of Leningrad?

I could not. Leningrad has a sense of fulfilment; Calcutta has a sense of restlessness.

Is it a symptom of anomie or an expression of a creative poise? Is it the precursor of chaos or the quest for order?

To find answers to such questions, tentative although they might be, it is necessary to examine the anatomy of the restlessness.

Widespread restlessness manifested itself for several years in West Bengal in different forms.

Violent and non-violent demonstrations and other activities took place as a protest against the life sitution, with a view to bringing about short-range adjustments in the economic and political structure, without however any consciously built-up programme for structural change of a far-reaching character.

Direct action including strikes, gherao, land occupation, took place in pursuance of a long-term strategy of changing productive relations.

This aimed at wholesale disruption of the institutions, which according to the followers of an iconoclastic orientation, mark a putrified social order, so that a new dispensation may emerge through free actions of a free society.

The activities of anti-social elements who take advantage of the

ideologically oriented climate of violence, are being left out of account, for in all social upheavals, such a category of people is always found to come up at one stage or the other.

It is neither possible nor necessary to relate each type of restlessness to a specific contextual setting. But at the same time, the contextual setting as a whole may be differentiated into the following structural-functional categories.

- 1. Psychological
- 2. Geographical
- 3. Historical and socio-economic
- 4. Politico-strategic

What do violent activities often culminating in cruel murders, mean to the persons indulging in them?

One of the theorists of violent revolution, Fanon, sees violence as 'a cleansing force, freeing the native from his inferiority complex'.

Another philosopher of revolutionary warfare, Debray, looks upon it as 'a breeding ground of solidarity, comradeship, unity, brotherhood, community'. Basic to this approach is the vision of gemeinschaft or integrated community, in contrast to the segmented atomized society, or gesellschaft, which is the gift of modern civilisation to its maker,—the man.

Two years ago, at a meeting of some leading intellectuals of Bengal, a veteran revolutionary leader who is trying to give a constructive orientation to politics, bewailed in great distress 'murder is no longer news in Calcutta; absence of murder is news'.

In another meeting held almost at the same time, a renowned Gandhian posed a question 'what is the meaning of what is happening in Calcutta? Is it a sick society reacting pathologically to the strains of development? Or, is it a healthy organism reacting to a sick atmosphere?' His answer was that it was the latter.

When a sensitive Gandhian perceives that the Calcutta situation reflects in some way the reaction of a healthy organ to a sick atmosphere, it seems that almost intuitively, he sees in it a move in the direction of the resurrection of the gemeinschaft, so badly needed in the existing condition of wholesale alienation of individuals, caused by the technology of mass production.

But when a hard-boiled revolutionary considers the situation pathological, he is looking at it from the point of view of the effectiveness of the strategy. It is thus Martin Oppenheimer sees it, when he says 'Guerilla detachments without mass movements are isolated, easily surrounded and overwhelmed by the armed forces.' Those who are manufacturing violence on a mass scale have a sense of strategy of their own. To examine the same, in terms of political sociology, the geographical, historical and socio-economic aspects also need to be taken into consideration.

Until the emergence of Bangladesh, the most important geo-political fact was the existence of East Pakistan, as part of a sovereign, but obscurantist State of Pakistan, on the one hand, and as a distinct cultural identity, having a special historical association with West Bengal on the other.

The proximity of China and the three Himalayan Kingdoms of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim has a great bearing on the political development of West Bengal. It is not fortuitous that the first insurrectionary movements for direct seizure of power took place at Naxalbari, which is not very far from Chinese territory and the then East Pakistan.

There are some distinct historical and socio-economic dimensions in the growth of West Bengal.

- (a) The existence of Bengal in the periphery of Aryan culture. Because of peripherial linkage with the traditional Aryan culture, heretic behaviour has been a way of life in Bengal through the ages.
- (b) Rise of an intelligentsia without the responsibility of production. The introduction of the permanent settlement in the last century created a class of absentee landlords, who had a secure income in land

and who, because of this, as well as because of the habit of undertaking economic activities under patronage or political cover, did not normally want to take risks in mercantile activities in the first phase, and manufacturing and industrial activities in the latter phase of colonial rule. This class had access to education and employment in the tertiary sector, which came up as an ancillary to colonial rule. It had an intellectual life which was free from the responsibility of production of wealth.

- (c) Seed of the culture of self-hatred. Flourishing in a system which did not require one to soil either one's hand or one's soul for the creation or maintenance of wealth, the new class could indulge in the sentimentality of philanthropism and ideological radicalism. But, radicalism in social and economic life was a different proposition, as it would have threatened the Establishment. The result was a hybrid production, a curious mixture of radicalism and conservatism, which manifested itself in the form of a culture of self hatred.
- (d) Lost opportunity for the rural poor. Due to their involvement in the wider market economy, under the dispensation of the East India Company, the rural artisans, craftsmen and traders became comparatively free from the clutches of higher castes, towards the end of the 18th century. It is significant that most of the artisans and craftsmen in Bengal, who have been included in the category of Nabasakh, enjoy a distinct social status. When large scale industries were set up in Bengal, this class was hardly attracted towards factory labour.

Further, as an aftermath of successive famines, and also due to the opening up of new areas for cultivation, under more secure conditions, there was shortage of agricultural labour in the villages. For factory work, therefore, labourers had to be recruited mainly from U.P., Bihar and Orissa. They constituted a distinct segment of the population and, in course of time, they formed channels of pressure within the industry, which made it

difficult for local people to get employment in factories, at least in certain industries, even when they wanted to do so at a later stage. Thus, the rural poor in Bengal missed the bus of employment opportunities on the advent of industrialisation.

- (e) Pioneer in stagnation. In Bengal, modernization started with the involvement of the elite of the society, in the tertiary or servicing sector of the economy, while the secondary or manufacturing sector went under the control of non-Bengalis. In the nature of things, there was a limit beyond which the tertiary sector could not go, without the support of the secondary sector. But because of early dissociation from the secondary sector, the Bengalis could not take advantage of the growing secondary sector, except in highly technical industries like engineering. This produced the paradox of stagnation of the economic life of the Bengalees in the midst of expansion and growth.
- (f) Limits of industrial modernization. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the engineering industry grew up in West Bengal at a rapid rate. Here, the ratio of unskilled labour is comparatively low and that of skilled, semi-skilled, administrative and other personnel is comparatively high. As noted earlier, the growth of the engineering industry could attract a good number of young persons from the Bengali middle class. But during the last few years, the engineering industry too is facing some problems because of the following reasons: (i) general recession in the country in the middle of the sixties; (ii) dispersal of government orders including those of the railways, in the interest of balanced regional growth; (iii) irregular supply of raw materials.

Other major industries in West Bengal are jute, textiles, tea plantation, mining and chemicals. For one reason or the other, growth and modernization of all these industries, except chemicals, have remained stunted, with serious social consequences. Modernization of industries changes the ratio of var-

ious classes in the total labour force of society. For instance, where modernization has been possible in. the jute industry, the ratio of unskilled workers to semi-skilled, skilled and supervisory, administrative and other personnel has gone down considerably. change in the occupational structure in industry provides better scope for the satisfaction of the aspirations of the urban middle class, as well as the children of the rich and middle peasantry and enter-prising working class, who try to emulate the way of life of the educated middle class.

(g) Double displacement of the migrants from East Pakistan. Up to December 1970, the registered number of refugees in West Bengal was 38.46 lakhs. If the second generation born in refugee homes is taken into consideration, their number would be over five million. The bulk of them have settled in the outskirts of Calcutta, namely 24 Parganas, Nadia, parts of Howrah, Hooghly and Burdwan. A good number have also settled down in West Dinajpur, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri.

A study conducted by the Jadavpur University into the occupations of the heads of the families by date of migration, reveals that persons in the lower age-group, particularly the new entrants to the employment market, are being pushed down to lower employment. Thus, double displacement has taken place among the refugees. Firstly, there has been wholesale and sudden displacement from their ancestral locale and, secondly, there has been displacement from traditional and aspired roles.

- (h) Loss of locational advantage of Calcutta and alleged flight of capital. Until recently, Calcutta enjoyed certain locational advantages, by way of:
 - (i) connection with the colonial market,
 - (ii) advantage of port and other transport and communication facilities,
 - (iii) lower price of steel, because of low transport charges

from Burnpur, Jamshedpur etc., and.

(iv) power supply.

At present, with more diversified export and import linkages, enforcement of a uniform price for steel throughout the country, the low utilisation of Calcutta port because of silting of the bed of the river Ganga, and failure of expansion of the power supply to keep pace with such expansion in the rest of the country, much of the locational advantages have been lost; and this, in a way, is related to the alleged flight of capital from West Bengal.

While the loss of the locational advantage of Calcutta has contributed considerably to the low rate of economic growth of East India, the Eastern region of the country as a whole, in case of West Bengal it has spelled near catastrophy.

In 1961, about 76 per cent of the total urban population of the State was concentrated in the Calcutta Metropolitan District, which covered only about 1 per cent of the area of the State. Outside this region, only 7 per cent of the total population of the State was urbanised. The implication is obvious. In the context of colonial rule, Calcutta grew as the primate city, sucking the resources from the hinterland, but without ploughing back the wealth generated for the growth of the latter. At the same time, Calcutta could provide some satisfaction to enterprising individuals from the interior, by drawing them into its orbit. With the debi-litation of Calcutta even this scope of secondary satisfaction has disappeared.

Today, a suffocating situation has arisen, wherein if Calcutta sneezes, the whole of West Bengal swoons. The Bengali elite however has other reasons to swoon. Bengal has been subjected to physical dismemberment again and again since the last century, creating thereby, what may be described as truncation-complex.

(j) Spectre of unemployment. The truncation complex of the Bengalees is not merely related to the traumatic experience of dismemberment, but has more practi-

cal considerations of reduced job opportunities in the areas outside their politico-administrative jurisdiction. Whereas 8 per cent of the total working population of the country was estimated to be unemployed at the beginning of the last decade, in Calcutta 18 per cent of the Bengali and 15 per cent of the non-Bengali labour force remained unemployed.

(k) Slums and blighted areas. There are 3000 registered bustees or slums with a population of seven lakhs within the jurisdiction of Calcutta Corporation. If the Calcutta Metropolitan District as a whole is considered, the number would be about 15 lakhs.

The foregoing appraisal of the psychological, geo-political and historical and socio-economic dimensions gives a sordid picture of the situation in West Bengal. One should add to it, the dislocation caused by Chinese aggression in 1962, the food crisis and breakdown of zones in 1963, which ultimately led to the food movement in 1966, and the Pakistan war of 1965.

rIt is this all-round crisis and stagnation which has created a nemesis complex in Calcutta in particular, and West Bengal in general. The movements of the pauperised middle class, student and non-student youth, industrial labour, and the restlessness of the decadent aristocracy and the classes which are feeling that the sand under their feet is drifting away, get mixed up in a mystique of blind fury and all-pervasive hatred. It is the latter which gives an intensity to life, which has otherwise lost its meaning. Perhaps, when blown up to infinity, chaos may appear as a system.

But, this way to look at things is an abject surrender of man's rationality and an absolute rejection of the values of community living that man has acquired in the course of his history.

If one is to overcome the nemesis-complex, it is necessary first to spell out the expected roles and motivations of the different categories of people and then to examine what is the implication of

the massive restlessness in this part of the country.

Compared to the previous generation, the middle class today is not economically much ahead of industrial labour; sometimes it is behind. But, at the same time, it is tagged on to a costly way of life which it cannot shake off easily. It is thus hypothesised that the middle class unrest is, to some extent, the function of inter-class mobility.

The youth and student unrest in West Bengal is undoubtedly linked to the middle class unrest. But, at the same time, it can be hypothesised that youth unrest in West Bengal is a part of the youth unrest with global dimensions, characterised by the following.

- (a) Inter-generation conflict and demand for democratisation in different institutional settings like family, school, university, etc.
- (b) As a sequel to the need for more and more specialisation of knowledge, loss of the role of the university as a centre for generation and transmission of integrated human values.
- (c) Change in the socio-economic composition of the student class, who are exposed to new aspirations without the material base.
- (d) Instability of the educational structure, which is also continually changing, in response to the rapidly changing technology of the modern era.
- (e) Urge for participant democracy in the context of mass society.
- (d) Hovering spectre of unemployment and economic insecurity.

In addition to the ideological ferment manifested in the goal for a socialistic pattern of society, there are some specific factors operating in West Bengal.

Until recently, as industrial labour in West Bengal mostly hailed from other States, their social linkage with the indigenous population was thin. Hence, the trade union activity was frequently related to the cultural lag, rather than industrial democracy.

For an appreciation of the context of agrarian unrest, a brief

notice is to be taken of the agrarian structure.

- (a) In West Bengal, 73 per cent of the holdings are uneconomic. Because of the built-in negative orientation towards industrial labour, it has also not been possible to reduce the pressure on land by the migration of the rural population for employment in industries of various scales.
- (b) Except for Mahisyas in Midnapur and Sadgops and Aguris in parts of Burdwan, there is no agricultural dominant caste in West Bengal with a network of social and cultural linkages, which would neutralise some of the harsher aspects of relations between the landowners and agricultural labourers.
- (c) The impact of technological innovation in agriculture has been rather low in West Bengal, because of the fragmentation of holdings, tradition of the land-owning classes to eschew manual labour, and inadequacies of the infra-structure of growth. In this connection, particular mention is to be made of the tardy progress of rural electrification.
- (d) The fluctuations in price structure in agriculture, particularly jute, also seem to have served as a disincentive to stable agricultural growth.

In this context of the agrarian structure and its functioning, what are the expected roles of the diverse sections of the population involved? In a broad sweep, the same would be indicated here. The rich cultivators, concealed intermediary right holders and the land based decadent aristocracy, suffer from the following.

- (a) They are conscious of the fact that the sand under their feet is running away and they suffer from a nemesis-complex.
- (b) Due to the stagnant character of the economy in West Bengal they find it difficult to build up an alternative base for the maintenance of the old style of life.
- (c) Finding themselves at bay, a complex of guilt and complex of

retaliation get mixed up and the historical class diffidence against violence no longer remains operative.

The middle cultivators (a) find themselves in the midst of a tornado and while they are interested to maintain their present production relations, they are also interested to improve the production technology.

- (b) In view of the general social climate, oriented towards sophisticated consumption norms, they also cannot generate savings for higher investment.
- (c) The improvement of production technology also requires operation on a viable scale. In view of extreme fragmentation of holdings, it would mean either pooling together resources through cooperative enterprises or acquiring the optimum base through the purchase of land or leasing in land, etc. But, in the prevailing socio-political climate, they do not feel secure to go in for any of these.
- (d) Though the middle cultivators as a class are status-quo oriented, due to the failure of technological innovations, they feel the pangs of frustration. The Union Government provides a scape-goat to be blamed and this class more readily sympathises with the moves which may ascerbate centre-State relations.

Owners of uneconomic holdings are (a) to some extent status-quo oriented in respect of production relations. At the same time, they are not unwilling to take advantage of the climate of lawlessness, as and when it prevails, to increase their productive resource.

- (b) Though they may adopt a radical posture in self interest, they may not, as a class, visualise the possibility of basically altering the economic structure.
- (c) Their restlessness is therefore not related to a long term strategy of social and economic change, but to a short term strategy of immediate economic gain.

In the wake of land reforms, there has been massive eviction of share-croppers in West Bengal. It is therefore obvious that (a) they would be interested in an agrarian

movement, which both provides immediate gain and also promises alteration of the social structure, so that the gain can be consolidated.

(b) As the share-croppers have limited experience of managing their cultivation, they are also conscious of the need of giving constructive orientation to their agitational platform.

In the agricultural sector, the attached agricultural labourers are the weakest section. They are to put up with not only economic exploitation, but also personal indignity. They would be more responsive to programmes, not only of liquidation of the structure of economic exploitation, but also of physical liquidation of the class which subjects them to personal indignities.

The unattached agricultural workers have a wider horizon than the attached workers. Besides, they have been beneficiaries of diversified economic activities which have taken place in the rural areas in the wake of the implementation of development programmes. Hence, though they would be more readily attracted by a radical platform committed to the alteration of the social structure, they would not be haunted so much by the retaliation-complex as in the case of the attached agricultural workers.

The expected roles of the various classes have been provided here as logical constructs. But the resultant frame should be considered more as a heuristic device, than as a guideline to predict the political behaviour of the segments of the population concerned.

There are a number of intervening factors to reckon with, to wit,

- (i) place of political sub-culture in the total culture of the society,
- (ii) traditional frames of political action,
 - (iii) elite structure.

It is not proposed to go into a detailed examination of all these aspects in the present paper.

In a general way it may be stated that in a highly diversified society

like India, which is trying rapidly to develop itself, but whose resources are scarce, almost every walk of life has a political dimension. But, there are certain constraints to naked power politics. Only 25 years ago, India was carrying on her liberation struggle. The moral stance of the liberation struggle still pervades the political scene. Hence, though the interests of the various classes, regions and other cognate social units are more and more coming into sharper focus, it is not always their relative strength which determines the course of political action. Sometimes, it is their relative weakness which becomes the focal points of moral upsurge, and political mobilisation takes place accordingly.

The moral slant to political action in its turn has certain implications. Firstly, it means that though there is almost all-pervasive politicisation, the political activists are not always the most significant elite to determine the course of political action. The elite structure is more diversified and draws heavily upon such sources as the social reformers, social philosphers, constructive workers, social scientists and other academicians. It has another implication, namely, that after a short-duration flare-up the weaker section tends to become a passive beneficiary. And thus, a social process started with a big bang dries up suddenly. It seems that here lies the explanation for the failure of transformation of the agrarian structure, according to the perspective laid down by the Planning Commission and almost all the political parties.

There are, again, traditions, frames of political action in the Indian context, constituted by caste and ethnic differences and factions cutting across caste and class, whose role in West Bengal requires to be examined.

The spread of rational values among the intelligentsia in West Bengal who, as stated earlier, have flourished historically, without the back pull of the responsibility of production, has undermined the importance of caste in regulating public affairs to a very considerable

extent, except among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Similarly, though factionalism flourishes in West Bengal, there is a widespread scoffing attitude towards it. But this formal attitude of rationality tends to drive the undesirable forces underground and not extinguish them. Through a process of rationalisation, in different pockets, ethnic and long standing factional linkages get identified with party affiliations.

In this context what comes more to focus is class interest as a platform for political mobilisation, though perhaps not always as a programme for political action. Thus, a climate of unrest has been created and the radically oriented parties try to channelise the same. round the demands for changes in production relations. But, because of the interplay of caste and factional forces, these demands do not seem to have crystallised in terms of clear cut economic programmes. Thus, on the one hand, there is widespread discontent, on the other, there is a stalemate. The stalemate in the rural society and the stalemate in the urban society interact on one another and deepen the crisis of non-transformation.

It will be an inadequate appreciation of the situation to end the analysis with the recognition of the gathering crisis.

If there is crisis, there is also composure. One can sense it, in the literature, in the films and in almost every medium of communication in West Bengal. The composure is derived, here, from a sense of commitment to values linked up with the global destiny of mankind. Once that is understood, one can see that what is happening in West Bengal is not just unrest, but something more. It is a restless quest. Undoubtedly there are anti-social elements, political adventurers and impatient activists who are taking advantage of this restlessness; but it will be a mistake to ignore the fact that underlying all these is the birth pang of a 'new today', to which the nation is committed through the preamble to the Constitution as well as the Directive Principles of State policy.

The city

SUGATA DASGUPTA

A HIGH density of population, relative over-all stagnation in terms of per capita income, subsistance agriculture and dysfunctional urbanisation—these provide some of the important characteristics of what can be called the 'eastern region' of India. Calcutta, the primate city, is its real capital in more than one sense of the term. For, it controls not only the finances of the zone but also the societal forces. Any crisis here accordingly provides the most crucial point of explosion for the whole area. It is for this reason that the C.M.P.O., while drawing up a master plan, had to provide for the development of a number of towns of the adjoining States and could not confine its work only to the city.

But, how large is the region? Geographically the area is much bigger. The eastern zone, so called, is thus bound in the East by Burma on the outer side and by the whole of Assam and Manipur in the rear; by Bihar and eastern U.P. in the West and by the North-Eastern part of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa in the South. In between it covers all the land that lies there—the whole of Bangla Desh, Nagaland, Tripura and the Andaman Nicobar Islands. The zone comprises an area of 6,500 sq. km. which is about 32.3 per cent of the total land of the Indian Union and covers 32.6 per cent of India's population. Barring Assam and the megalopolis whose per capita are much higher than that of the rest. the area is in the grip of severe economic and social crisis. Consequently, continuous political instability and social decay have been its hall-mark.

The picture is dismal not only for the Indian part of the zone but great political changes have taken place in Burma as well and the events in Bangla Desh are only too well known. If we, however, leave out the two sovereign States from our survey, the political instabilities in the hills of the eastern region, the turmoils of West Bengal and the critical stagnation in Bihar and Eastern U.P. would make it evident that the area shares many problems in common. Culcutta represents the most expressive and explosive manifestation of the above.

But there are others who feel that the whole region is suffering from a certain chronic malaise and what Calcutta embodies is the only effective protest against it. There is no doubt, however, that the crisis of the megalopolis is not an isolated event and since 33 per cent of people live in the area, their discontent is certainly a serious threat to the country. It is on the ability to sort out the intricate problems of the city that depends to a great extent the future of the subcontinent. The problem should not be viewed as one peculiar to West Bengal and the consequent social disorganization only of limited significance. The real task is, on the other hand, to view the city and its surrounding economic, political and cultural institutions in the perspective of the total region. The first step in the matter is to define the situation—for a problem well diagnosed is a problem half solved—and then to look for suitable remedies.

This essay on the city is an attempt in that direction. It seeks to define the hard core of the problem of the megalopolis in somewhat generic terms. For, much has been written on Calcutta and many people, including the present columnist, have already presented elsewhere considerable quantitative data on the incidences of disorgani-

zation of the urban structure. This article does not repeat these arguments but merely enumerates in brief some of the basic issues that are responsible for the crisis and indicates a few interim measures which might help in the matter.

A crucial matter for the understanding of the causes of disorganization is to analyse the behaviours and functions of the three important urban processes—economic, political and cultural that make the city; so that the already available data regarding its physical aspects assume a more meaningful picture. The physical disorganization is so compelling that usually all other factors are relegated to the background. But it is to be considered whether plans of physical development, if they are oblivious of the social aims, which include the political and economic, can at all succeed! This question is being raised today in most of the urbanised societies of the world. The interdependence of social and physical sectors of disorganization are thus increasingly coming to the fore, highlighting in any disintegrated urban structure the role of the societal factors as the main pace setter of disorganization.

The basic economic problem in this context is simple. It is merely that the metropolis is of a semicolonial character and maintains the traditions of 'drain' that has been the chief characteristic of the entire zone all through British rule. A large capital is concentrated in the city. It means a great deal of wastage of productive capacity on one hand and an underdeveloped agriculture on the other. The latter, the starving rural millions, are thus like a 'fetters' on the neck of the town. and the reverse too is true. A number of business magnates, middlemen, rather than producers, block the ways of production for developmental goods and indeed obstruct both productive as well as developmental ventures. The city, therefore, represents in a way an underdeveloped area, one that surely retards an allround social and economic development of the zone.

Since agriculture remains stagnant and the capital at hand does little to improve it, the organic link is disturbed and the city becomes a self contained unit of exploitation. It pumps in a disproportionately large share of national surplus and, as no part of this investment is channelised for the development of agriculture, the rural areas continue to remain stagnant. What happens as a result is anybody's guess. West Bengal enjoys the highest per capita income among all other States but the distribution is highly uneven. 'Mass of people' says Lokanathan 'lives in abject poverty' here. That makes for mal-development of the metropolis and retards the rate of growth of urbanism. The conversion of new territories into urban areas as the monolith expands does no more. therefore, than to let loose a systematic process of exploitation of the rural and the urban poor. It stifles the process of modernization of the vast masses of people, makes poverty acute, and social disorganization an institutionalised phenomenon.

All that the economics of the city thus leads to is the development of a highly rich elite class and a systemic impoverishment of a vast number of people. It thus perpetuates, if not brings to a head, the original scheme of exploitation, that lay inherent in the structure of the region. The profile is ugly.

What is true of the economic process is also true of the cultural and political. Here too the method is selective. The mould is elitist. Political and cultural developments leave out a vast mass of people from the orbit and create a persistently dominating elite class. It is they, who in collaboration with the economic barons, then rule or misrule the town.

The present revolt and violence in Calcutta is a revolt against this system, and a solution to the riddles of the city will have to be found in a thorough reversal of the process of growth and development. I will explain what I mean.

The famous cultural renaissance of undivided Bengal was essentially

a movement that touched only a handful of people, the upper caste, middle class Bengalee babus of the town. It produced a language, a refined drawing room culture, a set of new festivities, floral decorations and a totally different life style. The elite that was thus created might not have been rich; but proud of its newly acquired culture, it dominated the scene. Muslims in general, almost all the non-Bengalees, who form about 50 per cent of Calcutta's population and account for more than 50 per cent of earners and the whole of rural Bengal were left out of its orbit.

Products of this cultural revolution were men of high calibre. They provided generations of leaders to the Congress Party as well as to the underground group of revolutionaries. It is again the products of this renaissance, a handful of liberated Muslims, who formed the hard core of the elite in East Pakistan, who had accordingly stood up in the name of their language and culture and brought in a revolution. But, let us remember that the revolution in Bangla Desh did not succeed till its message had spread among the masses and the gap that separated the two groups of people, a hard core of educated middle class and the vast masses -the gap much bigger in the case of former East Pakistan-was bridged.

A strength of the Bangla Desh movement was that it gave a mass basis to its renaissance and broadened the elite base of the movement. The fact that the Pak army had to kill some 3,00,000 civilians only shows that a vast number of people were later influenced by the renaissance and consciously articulated their demands in no uncertain terms, even in the face of a ruthless enemy! This is exactly what has not happened in Calcutta. The elite still form a small coterie and live in isolation. For, development in the city has generally been of the elitist mode.

The field of politics of West Bengal is also no exception. Here, too, a highly selective elite got politicized and radicalised, first as revolutionaries with pistols whom the British called terrorists and then as socialists. All of them belonged to the higher 'caste class' strata and the vast mass of people could hardly share their sophisticated theoretical orientation. As a consequence, when violence spread it was violence, plain and simple, bloody and ruthless, that went wild. Without any projection of the societal model for which the political elite were toiling, the game degenerated into an ugly orgy of senseless massacre. violence without a theory; it was murder without politics. Even in the political parties themselves, and West Bengal has a wide variety of them, very few of the rank and file were conversant with theories. A 'dada' cult had, instead, held them bound to their leaders with a near feudal bond of fanatic loyalty.

This is the story of the city; a tale of the development of a ruthless elite culture that grew on the strength of borrowed renaissance, imported 'isms' and colonial capital. That is the big banyan tree under which not a blade of grass grows. Planted on the soil of the region which was initially barren, it sucked away the life blood of the area and drew to itself the best men and materials from the rural hinterland of the megalopolis as the logical culmination of the traditions of 'drain' and exploitation of the area.

But, the awareness that Calcutta has become a problem by itself has grown for some time. The recent episodes of violence, the political instability that led to a flight of men and materials from the megalopolis and the consequent domination of a group of extremists have also led to much rethinking and a three-fold remedy for the solution of Calcutta's problems seems to have now emerged. The first is a massive input for development of the capital—its physical forms and social services. The other is a determined bid to provide employment to the bulk of the unemployed youth of the town. The third is a political step, a semi-violent public agitation to curb the violence of protests and to remove the political 'murderers', lock, stock and barrel.

The three measures are already being introduced. The last one, a political move, partly sporadic and partly organised, has even yielded some results. The plans drawn up by the CMPO are being similarly sought to be funded. A blue print for the employment of the jobless young men, however difficult the task be, is also not inconceivable. It is only natural that the new government of West Bengal will take to all these in right earnest immediately after the elections. Yet, it is necessary to emphasise that all the three steps are mere relief measures. They are neither remedial, nor preventive and nothing will help to restore the lost balance of the regional system unless one seeks to reverse the entire process of growth. Piece meal efforts may help for some time; but the real remedy lies not in relief as in a bold effort to solve the real anomalies of the situation.

A recent seminar held at Calcutta tried to enumerate a few such measures. One of these relating to the structure of decision-making of the city comes first to my mind. The suggestion was that in order to achieve a process of decentralised and non-elitist development, the city be divided 'legally and practically into sizeable communities' which can ensure a direct face to face participation and meaningful functioning of democracy at a community level. In other words, each 'ward' of the city should be treated as a self-reliant decisionmaking unit with the fullest powers. They should be responsible for the preparation of plans for the areas, mobilisation of resources, as well as for implementation of necessary programmes. The development of each area of the town should not be thus centralised but a plan for maximum self-reliance should be introduced forthwith

The process must be carried forward logically by the introduction of a scheme of decentralised industries and wide dispersal of the latter to non-urban areas. For, the rural hinterland is to be integrated in a way that does not

encourage only the single track traffic any further. The process should indeed be spread westward to the suburban areas of the towns of U.P., Utkal and Bihar and eastward to Assam and the hill States, so that the relationship between the city and the rest of the region becomes one of mutual give and take. The massive investment that is on its way should not, therefore, be confined only to the city but the region as a whole must obtain its share.

The plan for the rehabilitation of the region can only succeed when the basic relationship between the city and the region is radically altered and the city ceases to be a megalopolis and the hinterland a sprawling limitless village. Culturally, too, the 'calcation's' culture must draw more from the Indian soil and environment and become the culture of the people. Politically, a scheme of decentralisation must similarly overturn the decision-making structure and socialise the apparatus. The city presents an epitome of exploitation bound in a rigid social frame. Any attempts at transformation will naturally have their impact on the entire structure and rationale of what has made Calcutta, the Calcutta of the day.

There are, however, two types of changes, one that helps to stabilise a system when it runs into difficulties and the other that changes the system itself. The present plans and policies envisaged for Calcutta provide an example of the first type. These are desperate attempts to save a system that is now crumbling. This is what one calls tinkering with a crisis. What we should aim, instead, is to change the system itself and provide a rational alternative to the western, monolithic urban form. The Frankenstein must sleep now. The youth of the city, groaning under dissatisfaction, are eager for certain fundamental changes. But they do not know what they are really seeking. It is time that the leaders of the nation placed before them a viable alternative and a model of a social system—one that will give them a new goal and programme to fight for as well as to live for.

Books

THE AGONY OF WEST BENGAL by Ranajit Roy,

Amrit Bazar Patrika (P) Ltd., Calcutta, 1971.

The Agony of West Bengal is the agonised cry of a veteran Bengali journalist against the 'discriminatory', 'bleed Bengal' policy which has been a constant theme of Bengal's political history ever since 'Clive marched triumphantly into Murshidabad' 'from the battle of Plassey (June 23, 1957)', he writes, 'The British 'bled' West Bengal for full one hundred ninety years one month and twenty-two days'. It continues to 'bleed' even now, perhaps more profusely, 'thanks to the Union government's discriminatory policy and the State government's uncertain stand'.

To many this may sound like yet another 'typical' outburst of Bengali sentiment. Perhaps, they may be partly right. For, most Bengali's tend to look at their own achievements and sufferings through that wonderful looking glass which magnifies their own images twenty times more and dwarfs that of others to one-twentieth part. And, yet, Ranajit Roy says that cannot be dismissed so lightly. His sentimental, often angry outburst, is carefully balanced with facts and figures, analyses nd weighty argument.

The book, a liberally spaced 113 page publication, contains a collection of ten of his articles. Nine of these were published in the *Hindustan Standard* between

February 14 and 25, 1971, in the series *The Agony of West Bengal*. The tenth article, pleading with the 'government' to 'consider the East Pakistan refugee problem *de novo*', was published in the same paper a few months earlier, on November 11, 1970 to be precise.

The collection can be divided into two broad groups: the first describing how the prosperous Bengal was systematically looted and plundered by the British for over 190 years, and the second analysing 'how the the economic, fiscal and rehabilitation policies framed and implemented by the government of India since 1947 have inevitably brought about a rapid economic decline of West Bengal.'

Looking at the 'bleeding' West Bengal of today, not many may believe that as late as the 1750s, Bengal was the most prosperous province of India. It had a flourishing agriculture, industry and trade. Its production of cotton, silks, sugar, saltpetre and indigo exceeded even that of the 'famous kingdom of Egypt', and these had markets not only in India but in many countries. Fruits, pulses, grains, clothes of gold and silk, muslins—everything was in 'great plenty'. 'The fame of the fine muslins of Bengal, her rich silks and brocades, her harmonious cotton prints had spread far and wide in Asia as well as Europe', wrote a British historian in the nineteenth century. There were also quite a few thriving ship-building

centres. 'Tamralipta and Saptagram were busy Bengal ports for centuries.'

This face of Bengal began to change very fast soon after the triumphant march of Clive, one of the 'birds of prey and passage', as Burke so rightly put it. Thirteen years after Plassey and five years after the grant of Dewani of Bengal to the East India Company, 'the famine of 1770 occurred, killing off a third of the population, according to Warren Hastings'. Significantly, it was around this year that the 'industrial revolution' in England began. The bulk of the money to sustain this revolution came from the 'Bengal plunder'.

Side by side, the East India Company also embarked on a determined policy to liquidate the thriving silk and cotton fabrics industry in Bengal. Mir Quasim wrote to the Company in 1762: 'They (the company's servants) forcibly took away the goods and commodities of the ryots, merchants, etc., for a fourth part of their value; and by ways of violence and oppression they oblige the ryots, etc., to give five rupees for goods which are worth but one rupee'.

The double-edged colonial plunder, strangulating Bengal's trade and production on the one side and promoting British products on the other through duty-free imports and a host of other devices, continued unabated. 'In course of five decades from Plassey, all industries from Bengal declined—cotton and silk spinning and weaving, sugar, salt, iron smelting, tool making, dyes and ship-building. Even the last two decades of the eighteenth century 56 ships and 93 snows, with a total tonnage of 39080, were built in Bengal. Soon the industry was also stamped out.

Britain's two parting gifts to the province were: the great famine of 1943 when, according to Calcutta University's Anthropological department, some 34 lakh people perished, and the partition of 1947. The two shocks coming one after the other shook Bengal to the very core. Her economy was shattered and her social and cultural fabric shaken to its foundation. Following the famine, a large majority of Bengal's peasantry became landless. "The lower middle class used up its reserves in the form of gold ornaments," and bank deposit savings. Before the province could recover from the 'aftermath of the war and the famine' partition once again violently disrupted the economy.

From here onward, Ranajit Roy turns his wrath against the Union Government for its many ommissions and failures, for its 'deliberate' policy seeking to pauperise West Bengal. Most of his arguments run on familiar lines. This does not mean that they do not deserve careful consideration. Indeed, a good part of the facts he has marshalled to prove his point call for either official rebuttal from the Centre or, failing which, a drastic change in its policy towards West Bengal.

His principal charge against the Centre is that its policies and plan allocations have led to a steady decline in West Bengal's economic achievements and performance. In 1947, it had 'the highest per capita income'. Eighteen years later, in 1965-66, it slipped

down to the seventh position: 'after Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Assam.' Not only that. 'Maharashtra, which together with Gujarat, occupied the second place in the number of registered factories in 1951, scored over West Bengal in 1961... The growth of Maharashtra was even faster in the 1961-65 period, the number of factories there in 1965 being 2834 against 2036 in West Bengal'.

In agriculture and allied sectors, West Bengal's net output in 1950 was '25 per cent higher than Maharashtra'. Ten years later, agricultural output in West Bengal recorded 'a mere 12.2 per cent increase' (the lowest in the country) as against 66.5 per cent in Maharashtra, 61.2 in M.P. and 50.2 per cent in Tamil Nadu.

Why did this happen? Ranajit Roy offers the following weighty arguments:

- 1. Discrimination in plan allocations. Rs. 154 crored to West Bengal in the first plan (actuals) compared to Rs. 224 crores to Maharashtra and Gujarat together (bilingual Bombay State). Rs. 145 crores (Rs. 9 crores less than in the first) to the former in the second plan as against Rs. 350 crores to the latter, Rs. 250 crores and Rs. 625 crores respecively in the third plan, etc.
- 2. Steep decline in the State's share of centrally collected taxes. On August 15, 1947, the Centre reduced the State's share of the jute duty from 62.5 to 20 per cent. The Centre's own share was raised from 37.5 to 80 per cent. On the same day, West Bengal's share of 'the divisible pool of the income-tax was reduced from 20 per cent to 12 per cent while Bombay's share was pushed up from 20 per cent to 21 per cent.' 'II West Bengal's share of the jute duty was cut on the ground of loss of the jute growing areas to East Pakistan, her share of the income-tax was reduced on the ground of the loss of population as a result of partition.' Per Rs. 100 income-tax collected in the State, 'West Bengal got back the lowest amount, Rs. 16.2, while Bombay got Rs. 19.4, Madras Rs. 48.6, Punjab Rs. 103.9 and Bihar Rs. 182.8.'
- 3. Disparity in jute and paddy prices. West Bengal was urged by the Centre to divert paddy land to jute'. As a result, jute acreage within a few years rose from 2,66,000 to 11,44,000. The price policy in subsequent years, however, put the jute growers at a disadvantage. 'The price of a bale of 181 kgs of jute in 1951 was Rs. 320' while that of 'a quintal of medium-coarse rice was Rs. 43, the respective prices in 1961 being Rs. 294 and Rs. 56.' In 1969-70, 'the price of a quintal of rice was more than that of jute (Rs. 125.51 against Rs. 103.49).' The result was that while jute growers in West Bengal languished, the State's deficits in rice multiplied without any fault of its own. On both counts its resources dwindled.

The author adduces similar evidence against many other 'discriminatory' policies of the Centre—the equalisation of coal, cement and steel prices which deprived West Bengal of its locationed advantage, the denial of permission to the State to impose 'octroi' in Calcutta' till 1969, discrimination in the industrial licensing policy, the continuous flight of capital, the neglect of the Calcutta port, etc. The presentation is not always

smooth, nor systematic. But perhaps that is exactly what he wishes to do to drive his point home.

Ranjit Gupta

ELITE CONFLICT IN A PLURAL SOCIETY,

TWENTIETH CENTURY BENGAL: by J. H.

Broomfield, University of California Press. Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1968.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL DECAY IN BENGAL: by M. F. Franda, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta 1971.

indian communism: by B. Sen Gupta, in 'Problems of Communism', United States Government Publication: January-February 1972.

The Hindu caste elite in Bengal, the bhadralok, have dramatic claims to academic attention—highly educated, erudite, self-conscious, political volatile and culturally the pace-setters in Eastern India, they completely dominated the more evident aspects of political life in Bengal. Moreover, it is possible to attribute a considerable degree of political homogeneity to the bhadralok, given the unifying effects of the anti-colonial animus felt by most sections of society. For historians of early 20th century Bengal, however, there is considerable danger of mistaking the appearance of a more or less unified political outlook for a homogeneous social entity.

For Broomfield, the bhadralok are not primarily an economic stratum but a status group, accessible through an English-language education and castelandowning status. In rural Bengal, they had climbed to dominance on the back of British experiments with land-tenures and the Permanent Settlement in the 18th and 19th centuries. Thereafter, they rapidly cornered the lion's share of new opportunities for professional, administrative and clerical employment, largely by dint of a cultivated facility with the language of their rulers. Towards the end of the 19th century, having flocked to Calcutta in numbers sufficient to dominate the social life of the city, they evolved a highly individual cultural identity to reinforce a caste particularism.

What distinguished the bhadralok from their privileged equivalents elsewhere in India, was that the usual dividing line between landholders and the professional middle-class did not exist in Bengal at the time. As a result, their social ascendancy led them to undertake determined forays into institutional politics, not without considerable success. By the beginning of the 20th century, however, in order to match their widening range of skills and expectations, institutional security became a much more urgent requirement, but by this time, armed with nationalism, they were pitted against a bureaucracy jealous of its own power, and wary of the dangers which Indian aspirations to self-government posed. The years 1912 to 1927 which Broomfield covers in depth, depict the bhadralok in their most vociferous phase—angry, yet more and more desperate, as an extended franchise and communal representation threatened their entrenched status.

In the legislative reforms of 1909 and 1912, Bengal's precocious elite had been acknowledged as ready for political responsibility. But, largely because of the Government of India's dictum that the devolution of power should proceed evenly, Bengal had to wait until 1921 for some measure of political responsibility. The intervening years were all it needed to dispel the liberal ideal in bhadralok politics. Increasingly impatient with their role as mere obstructionists in the council, 'playing the chorus in a Greek tragedy,' as an Indian Moderate put it—the bhadralok turned either to individual terrorism or to extremist nationalism.

A brief period of hectic bhadralok involvement followed. In Gandhian Non-cooperation and Swarajist success in Bengal, they had found effective ways of keeping themselves in the public eye. Moreover, the novelty of an active Congress organisation at the district level gave 'the rural bhadralok, in particular, a new feeling of involvement with the Nationalist movement.' Even the Muslim Khilafat committees were won over for Swarajist agitation—but the intense idealism of the first few weeks soon wore off when it was realised that Gandhian Civil Disobedience had unleashed a mass-agitation, and that it was only a short step from violence against the foreigner, to violence against property. Bhadralok students and lawyers who had responded so enthusiastically to the 'Triple Boycott', soon returned to the city and to a life-style that made less demands on them. For the sophisticated bhadralok youth, spinning, learning Hindi and labouring among villagers could have no attraction beyond initial romanticism.

To this volte-face, the lower classes could retort: 'The bhadralok politicians have run true to form in giving lip service to principles of social justice, and then turning their backs the moment radical action was called for.' Here Broomfield corners an important truth—there was no correlation between nationalist radicalism and social radicalism. If the logic of nationalist intransigence led the bhadralok into stirring up a mass-movement, then they were anxious to find other methods of politicking. Indeed, a deep responsive chord was struck in the elitist press when Gandhi called off non-cooperation, and C. R. Das led the Swarajists into the Council, vowing to wreck the constitution 'from within.'

The other striking fact to emerge from Broomfield's analysis is a broad dichotomy of Hindu landlord and Muslim tenant, a fact which the British could exploit to the detriment of the bhadralok. By 1926, with dyarchy brought to a standstill by the Swarajists within the Council, the Government could confidently enlarge the franchise in the knowledge that it would swamp C. R. Das' party. Thereafter, with Swaraj sundered by communalism (sedulously backed by the British), the bhadralok were gradually voted to the margins of the political system. For the next 20 years, it was relatively easy for Muslim ministries to keep their votes by consistently urging agrarian reform and an extension of education to the lower classes. But, for the bhadralok, condemned to sterile opposition, terrorism

and a strident communalism became a way of life, until partition restored political power to the landed.

Broomfield's narrative is brilliant, but there are striking conceptual shortcomings in his analysis. A functional and non-genetic conception of the bhadralok has allowed him only a limited perspective on a class in the process of formation. Under colonial rule, the evolution of classes is notoriously hybrid—without the profits of mercantile trade accruing to a class outside the feudal relations of production, the relatively modest beginnings of bourgeoisification are tied to the land, possibly to that section of the landed class free from an 'aristocratic' consciousness.

Moreover, this would take place more or less under the 'supervision' of the colonial power. That the bhadralok were eminently qualified for such a categorisation is clear from Broomfield's own research: in terms of a history as landed families, they were parvenus, not aristocrats; and that they had made inroads into commerce by the 1920s is evident from the allegiance of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce (under Byomkes Chakravarty, an 'Extremist') to Swaraj, by the recognition of the British commercial class that the bhadralok stood for indigenous entrepreneurship, and by the undercurrents of the Swadeshi movement.

This is not to equate the bhadralok with a bourgeoisie—as a social entity, they straddle both, a rentier, landholding class and the feeble beginnings of Indian commercial enterprise. It is significant, for example, that a high point of the nationalist struggle coincided with a period when the supply-lines of British capital were disrupted with the first world war, and the British were forced to turn to Indian manufactures.

A great deal of work needs to be done on this topic by scholars who actually look for these economic distinctions, by scholars sufficiently aware that a common nationalistic front can hide such differences of interest. That Broomfield himself had some difficulties in explaining discrepancies among the Bhadralok is evident from his frequent recourse to reclassifying them as upper and lower-class bhadralok. But- perhaps the most convincing proof that Broomfield's conceptualisation is 'static' is provided in Franda's book.

Franda has basic affinities with Broomfield's approach to social conflict. That 'personal group and class (sic) conflict can be expressed through community and caste associations . . .', is as cardinal to him as it is to the bhadralok conceived as a homogeneous elite. It is striking, however, that within 25 years of the Swarajist collapse, the bhadralok are already a 'fractured' elite, and Franda recognises a 'class-division which is appearing'. Surely Broomfield has missed the beginning of this process, a 'fracturing' only partly explained by the dispossession which partition entailed?

Perhaps the most disappointing thing about Franda's book is its character as a folio of still-shots. One might have expected that a series of essays written at different points of time, spanning 7 years ('64-'70) would have captured aspects of a society in motion. The Communist Party takes up a lot of space, but his first look at the undivided CPI provides very few indi-

cations of the directions its splinter-groups would take after 1964. This is not to desire the soothsayer's ability in the political scientist; but merely to wish that analyses be something more than post-facto rationalisations.

Nevertheless, there are some important insights in Franda's work on the electoral system. Both Franda and Broomfield, and Morris-Jones before them, have identified different 'levels' of political activity. Broomfield had shown that the disparity between the electoral failure of the Moderates under Surendranath Banerjea (even in a restricted franchise of 9,000 electors) and their simultaneous success within the Legislative Council, was due to the existence of two distinct idioms of electoral appeal. They had failed to understand that elections to the Council required them to talk the language of personal obligation and interest, just as the rhetoric of nationalism counted within the Council.

In a similar vein, Franda traces Atulya Ghosh's success as a State party boss to his ability to politick in three different idioms—one is a 'modern' idiom, concerned with formulations of programmes, policies and plans; the second is a 'traditional' idiom, addressed to caste and encompassing small spatial and social areas; the third is a saintly or ascetic style, as typified in Vinoba Bhave's political figure. It would be interesting to study just how much this has changed.

In order to avoid detailing all of Franda's diverse analyses, it is possible to isolate three broad assumptions which run through his essays.

Firstly, the family is seen as a microcosm of authoritarian political relationship. For example, Atulya Ghosh is depicted as a paternal-aggregative political personality; party organisations are seen as hierarchicalauthoritarian and factionalism is traced to the problems of transferring power from one generation to another. This analogy has taken a rather ludicrous shape, however, in an essay entitled 'Perceived images of authority among college graduates in Calcutta.' On the basis of a controlled questionaire and interviews, he concludes that the respondents' perception of the political system bore little or no relation to their age, type of education, employment or 'feelings' of economic deprivation; but he finds a 'striking' correlation between dissatisfaction with the system and an absence of 'closeness' between the respondent and his family! He concludes: 'it suggests the hypothesis that non-economic variables, and particularly those having to do with family relationships, may be more important in determining political attitudes than those variables commonly cited in the literature'. Indeed, this sums up a whole approach.

Secondly, the political process, the proliferation of political parties and splintering, correspond to a rationalisation of group interests. Often, the group is visualised as an economic interest, and where this is so, Franda is at his best. For example, in analysing the CPI split in 1964, he sees it corresponding to a division in the Kisan Sabha—a choice confronting its members between cultivating the landless or the small peasant. Similarly, the splintering of the Bangla Congress away from the INC was a revolt of those constituencies in which large millowners were

firmly in control. Nevertheless, it is a shortcoming in his analysis that a shift of focus (say, the CPM decision to build a revolutionary base among the peasantry) is merely guessed at by comparing essays written at different times. The actual transition, the constraints and imperatives of policy-making are replaced by a mechanistic 'point-of-time' account.

The third distinctive feature of Franda's analysis, on a macro-level, is the perception of a lack of political cohesion within the Indian States-system. The inability of a communist movement, for example, to find political tinder dry enough for a national blaze, is attributed to the segmentation of political and social life. To a surprisingly large extent, political developments which occur in one area do not affect developments in others, so that 'discontent is localised and instabilities are often quarantined'. This idea, of course, has important applications, but it is stated, not explained.

One gets the impression that both Franda and Broomfield are labouring within a set of pre-formulated axioms. This is perhaps the place to note that a great number of western scholars accept and propagate 'atomic' theories of group-caste-family interests, thereby refracting the 'process' of Indian societies. Whether this is due to a European academic tradition which has labelled its own economic development as 'classical'. (thereby applying different norms and standards to 'deviationary' models) or whether the novelty of conscious, elaborate 'castes' distract them, it is hard to say. At any rate, the need to develop much more coherent 'methods' for studying Indian societies, so as to supercede 'atomism', is very urgent.

In a different key, Sen Gupta's article on 'Indian Communism' is a crisp, non-controversial account of the changed emphases of the various communist parties, with a spotlight on the CPM in Bengal. Land reforms in the '50's and 60's, he says, did not bring about change in rural relations, but merely brought some intermediaries under government control, leaving 20 million big-and middle-landlords untouched. Subsequent inputs in agriculture benefitted this class most, largely because the electoral obeisance of the rural masses to the Congress made it easy for peasants to be exploited without fear of social upheaval. Even today, 'the majority of Congress legislators at both the national and state levels are either landholders themselves or are professionally or occupationally linked with landed interests'.

The 'really destitute' among the peasantry began their move away from Congress after 1962 and then the 'Green Revolution' in particular, confirmed them in this posture. As ownership of improved land appreciated in value, the tenant-farmer was pressurised to leave, thus intensifying attention on peasant discontent—and their decimation forced the CPI and CPI(M) to devote greater attention to the rural poor, with the result that the latter party now has a peasant movement of its own. Since 1968, however, when Harekrishna Konar's thesis on 'devote primary attention to the peasantry' was accepted, CP(M) efforts to translate policy into action have twice been nipped

in the bud by the imposition of President's Rule on Bengal.

Sen Gupta concludes by saying that 'the CPI(M) has finally contrived what appear to be tactics of militant peasant struggle relevant to the realities of Indian society'. Perhaps, the only adequate sequel to his article would be a study of how obstruction and institutional repression have drastically reduced the electoral prospects of the CPI(M), and of what repercussions are likely to follow. If one accepts his formulation that 'the peasant . . . probably constitutes the most radical element in the class-structure of Indian society', then the evidence of a system heavily weighted against them must be a powerful spur to organisation.

Pradip Krishen

COMMUNISM AND BENGAL'S FREEDOM MOVE-

MENT: Volume I (1917-29) by Gautam Chattopadhyay, People's Publishing House, Delhi. 1970.

If the author had restricted the scope of his enquiry to the area indicated by the title of his book, this might have been a very interesting and useful study. Instead, the title seems to have little relation to the contents as the author seems more concerned to provide the definitive history of the communist movement in India. For, in his Preface, he states that there is 'no authentic documented history of the communist movement in India' and that such a study is now necessary. The author does not really succeed in this attempt for what totally confounds him, and seriously affects the authenticity of this book is both a paucity in subject matter as also a certain difficulty in defining a 'communist'.

To begin with, communists in India during the period under review were few and far apart and could almost be counted on the fingers of one hand. The few Indians who can claim to be genuine communists—such as M. N. Roy, Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Abani Mukherji and Nalini Gupta—spent most of their time abroad and were unable to influence the mainstream of the nationalist movement in India. The Russian Revolution of 1917 certainly had its impact on political thinking in India for it was tempting to see in the fall of the Czar a confirmation of the hope that, one day, British autocracy in India would crumble too.

It also served to make more members of the educated Indian elite aware of socialist and Marxist—as opposed to communist—ideas. But it did not lead to any significant increase in the numbers of communists in India. Neither did the formation of the Communist Party of India in Tashkent in 1920, for it was initiated by and composed almost entirely of Indian exiles.

The author is obviously aware of the fact that communists in India during this period were only a

pathetic and isolated handful and gained notoriety largely through the ineptness of the British in staging the Kanpur and Meerut trials. Chattopadhyay is almost desperate in his attempt to find socialists, or at least communist sympathizers, in perfectly innocuous people. Take, for example, the following passage: 'S. A. Dange told me, in course (sic) of an informal chat in January 1969 in Calcutta, that when in 1924 Dange was standing his trial in the Cawnpore Bolshevik Case, Sachin Sanyal [young revolutionary] came to see him and offered him legal help and solidarity. This clearly shows that though Sachin Sanyal never became a full-fledged communist, he was extremely friendly towards the communists'.

It is not my intention to argue that there were no communists in India during this period or that they played no part in the nationalist movement. However, it is amazingly easy to confuse anti-imperialist sentiments for the professions of communistic ideas. The author is constantly falling prey to this temptation and fails to unravel the ambiguity. Take, for example, an anonymous poem written in 1926, quoted by the author as a communist poem 'aimed at capitalist Indian landlords:

'You brush your hair finely,
After taking a bath in our blood—
You ride in luxury cars,
After robbing us of our all;
We cultivate your land,
We supply you the needed rice,
Yet, we suffer in empty stomachs—
Why is it so, that is the question.'

Would it be entirely wrong to read in this poem an indictment of the British rulers of India?

Given the fact that there were few communists in India during this period, the author would have done well to enlarge the scope of his enquiry. As it is, he restricts himself to Bengal so that such eminent Indian communists as Dange and Chettiar get only passing mention. Furthermore, the author fails to be objective and takes sides on various issues. He seems to hold something against Muzaffar Ahmed and is constantly ridiculing him [and trying to belittle his role in the development of the communist movement in India]. While on the other hand, Chattopadhyay seems almost to hero-worship Abani Mukherji. Such biases and personal prejudices are a serious handicap to any historian but more so to one who is trying to provide 'an authentic and documented history'.

The author not only fails to be objective and to grasp his material properly, but has attempted to expand into a full book what would only form 20 pages at the most of a detailed study of the communist movement in India. Even there he does not really succeed for of the 189 pages of this book, there are only 126 of text—the rest being devoted to other reminiscences of various septuagenarians which have been euphemistically titled 'Interviews'. There is

no bibiliography and no index—both of which are serious handicaps to the reader.

On the whole, the book is written in a direct and simple style which forms a welcome change from some of the more clever-clever attempts by Indian authors. However, Chattopadhyay cannot restrain himself from using superlatives and from employing pejorative and emotive words. So that, one has a 'remarkable article', 'a brilliant article', a 'sharp article', 'a remarkable speech'; while someone 'sharply stated' or made 'a shattering reply' or 'a sharp denunciation' or 'sharp political rejoinder'; while British archives are 'imperialist records' and the peasants are, inevitably, 'the toiling masses'.

Tejeshwar Singh

THE DISINHERITED STATE—A STUDY OF WEST

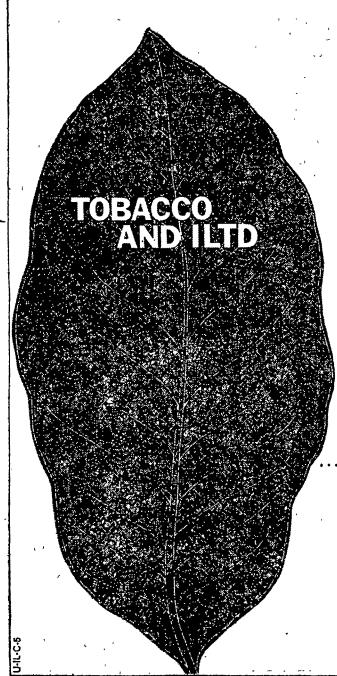
BENGAL: 1967-70, by Sankar Ghosh; Orient Longman, 1971.

The political and economic situation in West Bengal has been a constant cause of worry to the Central Government. Newspapers flashing reports of violent clashes among the supporters of the political parties—and there are about twenty-six of them, which declare their faith in parliamentary democracy, excluding the CPI (M-L) and its splinter groups—in which the anti-social elements are freely used by each one of them, have built up an image of West Bengal which is utterly chaotic.

However, to the discerning students of the Indian political system the situation demands a thorough understanding of the regional characteristics of a society, a serious study of Centre-State relations, especially under the situations where different political parties with divergent economic and political ideologies happen to be in power in the Centre and in a constituent State, besides pondering over its impact on the over-all development of a healthy federal structure.

Earlier, Marcus F. Franda has shown in his study of the relations between the Central and the State Government of West Bengal (West Bengal and the Federalizing Process in India) that the dominance of one party at both the ends does not necessarily result in a concurrence of views or an assured implementation of the policies proclaimed by the central leaders. The period covered by him was from the time of the States Reorganization to the year 1967, i.e., before West Bengal had seen a coalition government. The developments since 1967 have really been cataclysmic. The book by Sankar Ghosh which is under review covers a period of three years, i.e. 1967-70, which saw the rise and fall of two United Front Governments and several spells of President's rule in West Bengal.

The three parts into which the text of the book is divided—the fourth only includes appendices—deal with the description of the problems and the detailed account of the working of the two United Front



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Post Box 338 NEW DELHI 1 Governments. The first part raises extremely important issues. In this the author has pointed out that economic stagnation, the flight of private capital and the apathy of the Central Government towards the demands of the State government for the larger allocation of resources have produced an anti-Centre attitude throughout the length and breadth of the State. With the help of statistics he has shown that the needs of West Bengal have been given lesser priority than the rest of the States of the Union even when its contribution in national foreign exchange earnings has been more than that of other States.

The author betrays a strong apprehension that the geo-political situation of West Bengal is one of the reasons for the Central Government's uncharitable attitude towards the Leftist State Government. West Bengal is, after all, not the first State in India to have a leftist bias. No doubt, this argument cannot be brushed aside lightly as it seems natural for the Central Government to treat the constituent units according to their relative importance. But the treatment meted out by the Central Government to the demands of a State lying in a sensitive region is open to criticism. The Central Congress government has been known to be assiduously placating the rural voters and starving those urban centres of resources that had shown a strong propensity to vote for Leftist parties. The Calcutta metropolitan area had been the worst affected region in this respect.

Another important fact which the author has highlighted while dealing with the growth of alienation of the local people is the apathy of the non-local entrepreneurs towards the development of the city. Unlike Bombay's business community which has taken a keen interest in the all-round development of metropolitan Bombay, Calcutta based business has ignored the city altogether.

West Bengal's relations with the Centre took a radical turn and gradually slipped out of the control of the Congress leadership after the death of Dr B. C. Roy who was able to influence the Central leaders and get the State its due from the Central Government. The utter neglect of the land reforms increasingly weakened the hold of Congress in the rural areas. Anti-Congressism became the common factor between the different political parties which joined together to defeat the Congress at the polls. So much so, that even the inter-party clashes showed a downward trend during the periods when the controversy with the Centre was at its peak. Although the opposition parties were able to wrest power from the Congress, it continued to be the largest single party in the State. But, central leaders' attempts to re-establish the hold of the Congress with the help of the central authority only increased general hostility towards the Central Government.

The formation of the CPI(M-L) has complicated the political scene further. The author has clearly pointed out—contrary to the popularly held view—that the CPI (M-L) cadre has nothing to do with the general

anti-social elements. However misguided the CPI (M-L) boys may be, the motivation behind their activities undoubtedly remains strictly political. Their pro-China declarations have brought the wrath of the central government and led to a general demand for radical repressive measures to curb the misguided movement. The whole development is unfortunate because the disease is much deeper; in the system itself, and without tackling the economic stagnation very little can be achieved.

Looking back into the history of the freedom movement, one would notice that the response to the Gandhian leadership in Bengal had always been only lukewarm. Even Tagore had fundamental differences with Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhian philosophy with its predominently rural bias-village republics, the spinning wheel, decentralization of industry and its opposition to large scale industrialisation—could hardly find support in militant areas like Kerala and West Bengal. The challenge from these States has been qualitatively different from the other States where the Congress is opposed at the polls. The Indian National Congress has from time to time made suitable adjustments in its political programme to give it a more socialist outlook. Each such adjustment has thrown the Leftist parties out of gear as the author has also pointed to the complete bewilderment of the United Front parties in West Bengal over the nationalisation of the banks.

In the second and the third parts of the book, the author has impartially given the factual account of the working of the two United Front Governments in 1967 and 1969. The 18-point and 32-point programmes are reproduced in the fourth part (appendices). The author's anxiety shown in the first part about the possible demand for the re-unification of the two Bengals and his reminding us of the fact that the demand was actually raised at the time of the partition, is probably meant to focus attention on the urgency of sweeping economic reforms in the State. It is a matter of great satisfaction that in spite of so much political strife and violence in the State no party has shown a narrow regional outlook. For most of the Leftist parties, the problem is that of a class struggle at a particular stage of development and the remedies suggested by them are applicable to the country as a whole. However, one cannot be sure that all the parties after losing to the Congress would keep their present composure. Yet, any such slogan is most unlikely to get popular support in the changed circumstances.

As the author has mentioned in the preface that his study was overtaken by the train of events and consequently he had to make changes in the text to update it, one is apt to think that it has again been left far behind the political situation prevailing in Bengal after the recent mid-term poll. The book, however, is extremely informative and does dispel certain commonly held notions about the state of politics in West Bengal.

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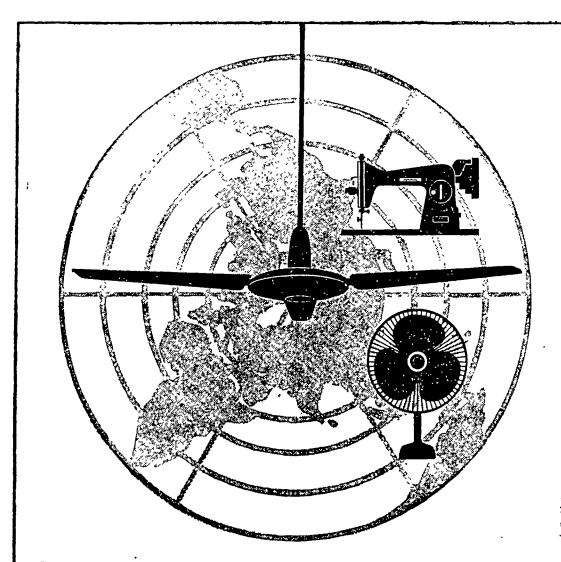
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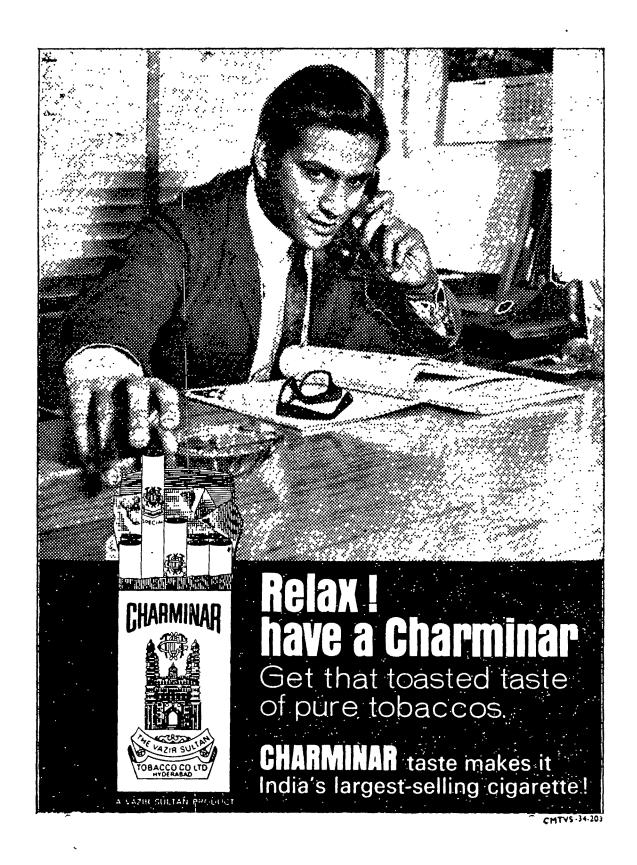
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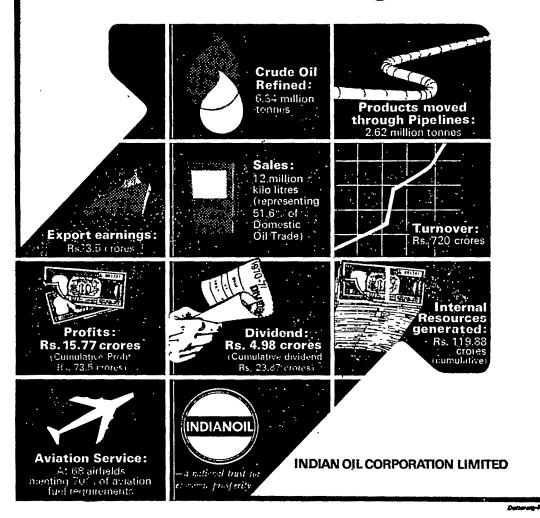
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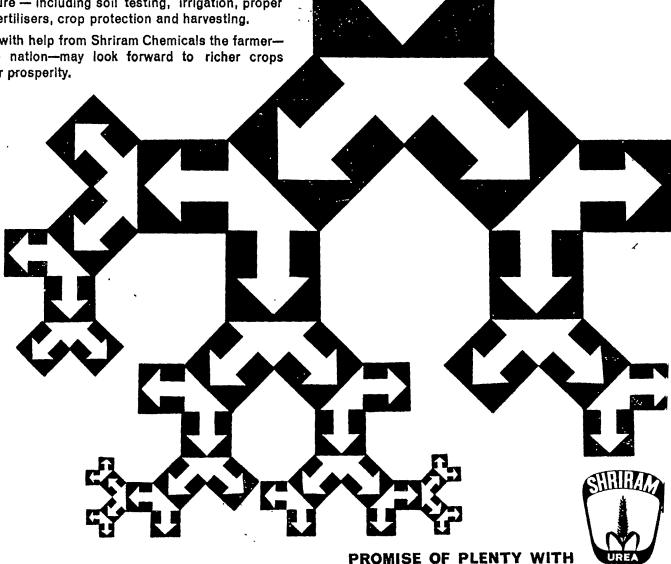
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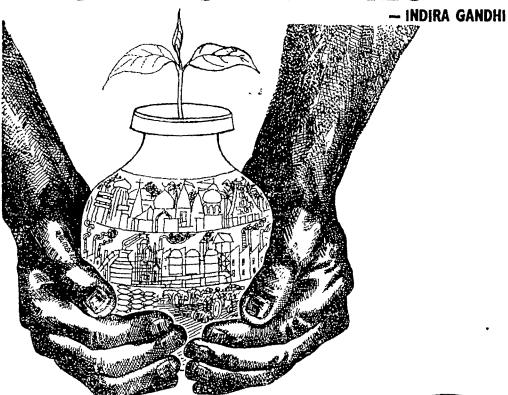
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COVER

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The problem

WITHIN a period of one year the country has been through two elections. In both, the Congress Party won handsome victories. But the gains made in terms of its share of votes have been far less than the seats won would suggest. The party has yet to recover its 1962 position. The opposition parties still enjoy very considerable electoral support in the country.

In March 1972, 2722 Assembly constituencies, distributed over 16 States and 2 Union territories went to the polls. Of these, 33 constituencies returned candidates unopposed: 30 of the Congress (17 from Andhra Pradesh, 2 from Assam, 5 from Jammu and Kashmir, 3 from Maharashtra and I each from Punjab, Rajasthan and Manipur) and 3 of the APHLC from Meghalaya. In 5 constituencies elections are to be held later: 3 in Himachal Pradesh and 1 each in Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir. The total valid votes polled in the contested constituencies amounted to 59.17 per cent of the total electorate of 19,50,93,443.

Table 1 gives the Statewise seats held by the different parties over three general elections (1962, 1967 and 1972) In the 1972 elections, the Congress has secured two-thirds majority in 11 out of 16 States. In Meghalaya it had an electoral alliance with the All Party Hill Leaders Conference, which is the local ruling party. In Manipur, with 28.33 per cent of the seats, it emerged as the largest party in the State. Including Goa, Daman, Diu and Delhi with the rest of the States, the Congress has secured 70.8 per cent of the total number of seats in the State legislatures.

In terms of seats the opposition parties suffered considerable losses, while the Congress greatly improved its position. It not only retrieved the ground lost in 1967 but actually increased its seat-shares by 8.2 per cent over its position in

* The 1972 data are computed from the Press Information Bureau releases. 1962. Excepting in Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir, the seats secured by the Congress in the recent elections, are more than 1962. In Bihar its present position shows an improvement by 12 per cent over 1967. In Jammu and Kashmir it is not proper to compare the party's 1972 position with that of 1962, since at that time the Congress did not officially function in the State until January 1965.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Congress has secured an almost three-fourth majority in 1972, whereas it had secured only 49 per cent of the total seats in 1962, and 56 per cent in 1967. The principal looser has been the Jana Sangh which has lost as many as 30 seats (10 per cent) of its 1967 strength.

In Rajasthan also the Congress performance has been remarkable. It has improved its position by 30 per cent over 1967 and 29 per cent over 1962. In this State the main loosers have been the Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh. The Swatantra Party lost 37 seats (20 per cent), more than three-fourths of its strength in 1967. The Jana Sangh won only 8 seats (4 per cent) in 1972 whereas in 1967 it had won 22 seats (12 per cent).

In Bihar, the Congress has won 167 seats as compared to 118 seats in the 1969 mid-term poll, whereas the Jana Sangh strength has gone down from 34 seats in 1969 to 26 seats in 1972. The merger of the PSP and the SSP has not improved the electoral position of the socialists. The Socialist Party won only 33 seats this time compared to the combined PSP-SSP strength of 86 seats in 1967 and 70 in 1969. The number of Independents elected has been reduced from 33 (10 per cent) in 1967 and 24 in 1969 to 12 (1 per cent) in 1972 which, incidentally, is the same as in 1962. The Swatantra Party has suffered a major setback, while it had 50 seats (16 per cent) in 1962 it is now left with only 2 seats. The Con-

gress (O) has emerged as the second largest opposition party with 30 seats (9 per cent).

In Gujarat, the Congress has improved its position since 1967. This time it has won 12 (29 per cent) more seats than in 1967. The Swatantra Party has suffered a very heavy defeat and has failed to win a single seat. (It had 66 seats in 1967.) The Congress(O) which was in power before the elections, became the second largest opposition party in the State with 16 seats (about 10 per cent) in the new Assembly.

The Congress has improved its position in Mysore over its 1967 position by 8 per cent. Here, also, the Congress (O) has become the second largest party with 24 seats (11 per cent). The Swatantra Party did not get even a single seat; it had 16 in 1967. The Socialist Party's strength has been reduced from 26 in 1967 to 3 in 1972. The number of Independents elected has also gone down from 41 (19 per cent) in 1967 to 15 (7 per cent) in 1972.

In West Bengal, the performance of the Congress has been noteworthy. It has secured 216 seats (77 per cent) out of 280, whereas it had 127 (45 per cent) in 1967, 55 (20 per cent) in 1969 and 156 (62 per cent) in 1962. The CPI(M), the largest opposition party in 1967 and the largest party in 1969 (80 seats) and in 1971, could this time win only 14 seats (5 per cent). The CPI in alliance with the Congress has secured 35 seats (12.50 per cent), which compares favourably with its performance in 1969 when it secured only 30 seats. The Independents who numbered 37 in 1967 have now been reduced to 5.

Although the opposition parties have suffered badly in terms of the seats won, in terms of votes secured they have not lost much ground. In some of the States, they have actually improved their voting strength over 1967.

The Jana Sangh, for example, has improved its popular support by 2 per cent in Bihar and

in Madhya Pradesh and in Rajasthan it has retained its 1967 position. (In Bihar compared to 1969 the Jana Sangh vote has declined by 3 per cent.)

The CPI(M), (a strong force in West Bengal), despite its losses of seats, has retained about 28 per cent of electoral support.

In Punjab, the Akali Dal's share of the valid votes polled is 28 per cent, which is only 1 per cent less than in the 1969 mid-term poll.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the Independents constituted the main opposition and won 26 per cent of the valid votes polled, compared to 9 per cent in 1967. Since the Plebiscite Front has been banned, it is likely that many of its candidates stood as Independents, and their vote reflects the support the Front enjoys in the Kashmir valley. All the 9 Independents have won from the valley region where they secured 33 per cent of the total valid votes polled. The Jamaat-e-Islami—a local party—has also secured 12 per cent of the votes in this region. But, in the Jammu division where it had put up two candidates, none was returned.

Compared to the Kashmir valley region, the Congress enjoyed greater support in the Jammu division in terms of votes polled as well as seats won. In the valley it secured 28 seats, (about 67 per cent) with a popular support of 53 per cent; won 28 seats (about 90 per cent) with 59 per cent votes.

The performance of the Congress (O) has been very poor but in terms of votes polled it still enjoys substantial support in Mysore and Gujarat, where it won 24 and 26 per cent of votes respectively. The Congress (O) seems not to have hurt the Congress except in Bihar; the votes it secured probably came from the other opposition parties.

		Party	(Congress		Cor	igress (C))	Ja	na Sangi	h `	S	watantra	
States			62	67	72	62	67	72	62	67	72	62	67	72
Assam ·	•		79	70	95						,.		2	1
			75.24	58.33	83.33			×		• •	• •	::	1 67	0 88
Andhra Prades	h		171	163	219					3		19	29	2
		4	58.16	57.19	76 31			• •	•	1.05		6.46	10 18	0.70
Bihar	• •	•	185	128	167			30	3	26	26	50	3	2
			58.18	40 25	52 52			9.43	0.94	8.18	8 18	15.72	0.94	0.63
Gujarat*			113	93	139	•		16		1	3	26	66	
•			73.38	55.36	83.23			9 .5 8		0.60	1.80	16.88	39.29	
Haryana				48	52			12		12	2		3	
•				59.26	64.20			14.81		14.82	2.47		3.70	
Himachal Prade	sh*			34	51	•				7	5		1	
				56.67	78.56					11.67	7.69		1.66	
Maharashtra			215	202	222					4	5			
			81 4 4	75.09	82.22			, .		1.49	1.85			.:
Madhya Prades	h		139	167	220				41	78	48	2	7	
			48.77	56.42	74,32			_	14.39	26.35	16.22	0.70	2 36	
Mysore			136	124	165			24		4		9	16	
1.1,0010	•	• •	66.02	57.94	76 39	+	• •	11.11		1.87		4.37	7.48	
Rajasthan			87	89	145	–	• • •	î	i 5	22	8	36	48	11
renjastituti	• •	• •	49.71	48.37	78.80	•		$0.5\hat{4}$	8.57	11.96	4.35	20.57	26 09	5.98
Jammu & Kash	mer*		702	39	57	•	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		0.57	3	1.53	20.57	2000	
Janua oc ikasn	LINE	• ,	93.33	73.58	77.03	•	• •	• •	• •	5,66	4 05	•	• •	• •
Punjab			90	47	66	• •	• • •	•	8	9		3	•	• •
runjao	• •	• •	58.44	45.19	63.46	• •	•	•	5.19	8.65	• •	1 95	• •	• •
West Bengal			156	127	216	• •	• •	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		0.03	• •		· ;	• • •
Mest pengar	• •	• •	62.15	45 36	77 14	• •	• •	0.71	• •	$0.3\dot{6}$	•		0.36	• •
Manager				15	17	• •	• •	0.71	• •		• •	• •	0.50	• •
Manipur	•	• •	• •	51.72	28.33	• •	• •	1.67	• •	• • •	• •	• •	•	
/T-1			• •	27	41 41	•	• •	1.07	• •	• •	• •		• •	• •
Tripura	• •	• •	• •	90.00		•	• •		• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •
Manhalassa			• •	30.00	68.33	•	• •	• •		• •	٠	•	• •	•
Meghalaya	• •	• •	•	• •	15.00	• •	• •	• •	•	• •	• •	• •	•	•
				• •	15.00	•	• •		• •	• •	• •	• •		• •
			1441	1373	1881			86	67	170	100	145	176	16
TQŢAL:			63.17	55.12	71.36			3.26	2.94	6.82	3.79	6.36	7.07	0.61

Note: The per cent share of seats are shown below actual figures.

*Election to three constituencies in Himachal Pradesh, and one each in Jammu & Kashmir and Gujarat are to be held later.

1. The PSP and SSP figures have been added together in 1962 and 1967.

2. This figure pertains to National Conference, which was formally merged with Indian National Congress on January 26, 1965.

**The figures for 1972 are for the 16 states only This does not include the two Union Territories where also the elections were held this time.

TABLE: State-wise votes polled by

										State-Wis	e totes b	oned by
Parties	Congress			Congress (O)			Jana Sangh			Swatantra		
States	1962	1967	1972	1962	1967	1972	1962	1967	1972	1962	1967	1972
Assam	48.25	43.60	53.19			0.47	0.45	1.84	0.27		1.49	0.58
Andhra Pradesh	47.25	45.42	52.11			0.18	1.04	2.11	2,40	10.40	9.84	2.14
Bihar	41.35	33.08	34 12			13.91	2.77	10.41	12.04	17.25	2 33	0 80
Gujarat	50.84	45.96	50.56			23.70	1.33	1 88	*8.94	24.43	38.19	1.93
Haryana		41.33	46.90			10.80		14.39	6.55		3 18	
Himachal Pradesh		42.19	50.75			2 77		13.87	8 03		1.93	
Maharashtra	51.22	47.03	56 32			1.09	5 00	8.18	6 25	0.44	1.12	0.09
Madhya Pradesh	38.54	40.66	48.14			0.26	16.66	28.28	28.46	1 23	2 55	0.58
Mysore	50.22	48 43	53.56			25 65	2 29	2.82	3 98	7.15	6.82	0.56
Rajasthan	40.02	41,42	51.01			1 34	9.15	11.69	12.17	17 11	22 10	12.29
Jammu & Kashmir	66.963	53 02	55.62			0.27		16.45	10 02			0.10
Punjab	43 72	37.74	42.84			0.24	9.72	9.84	4.97	3.88	0.51	0.01
West Bengal	47.29	41.13	49.44			1.47	0.45	1 33	0.19	0.57	0.81	• • • •
Manipur		32.53	30.21			2 37	0.75		0.22	0.27		
Tripura		57.95	44.83			20,	•	0.35	0.07	•		
Meghalaya	• • •	•••	9.84			•			0.07	•		• •
TOTAL:	46 21	42.33	44.67			4.61	4.56	8.15	7.87	7.93	7.06	1 11

12

This figure includes the votes polled to other parties also. Actual votes polled to other parties and independents were not available.
 This figure includes the votes polled to independents also; the bifurcated details were not available.
 The figures are actually for the National Conference party, which was formally merged with Indian National Congress on January 26, 1965.
 This figure includes votes polled by the following parties; Alya Sabha (2.22), SUC (0 07), RPI (0.10), and RPI-K (0.04)
 *The PSP and SSP figures have been added together in 1962 and 1967.

1 different parties (1962-72)

	CPI			CPI (M))		SP1		(ther Pa	rties	In	depende	nts		Total	-
62	67	72	62	67	72	62	67	72	62	67	72	62	67	72	62	67	72
••	7	3				6	- 9	4	12	. 7	6	8	25	5	105	120	114
5 i	5.83 11	2.63	• •	·:	·i	5.71 2	7.50 1	3.51	11.43	5.83	5.26 5	7.62 51	20.83 68	4.39 53	100.00 294	100.00 285	100.00 287
17.35	3.86	2.44		3.16	0.35	0.68	0.35	• •	• • •	0.35	1.74	17.35	23.86	18.47	100.00	100.00	100.00
12	24	35		4		36	86	33	20	14	13	12	33	12	318	318	318
3.77	7.55	11.00		1.26		11.32	27.04	10.38	6.29	4.40	4.09	3.77	10.38	3.77	100.00	100.00	100,00
• •	• •	1	• •	• •		7	3	* *	1	• •		7	2.00	8	154	168	167
• •	• •	0.60	• •	• •	• •	4.55	1.79	• •	0.65		4	4.55	2.98 16	4.79 11	100.00	100.00 81	100.00 81
• •	• •	••	• •	• •	• •	••	• •	• •	••	2,47	4.94	• •	19.75	13.58	• •	100.00	100.00
	ż	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	• • •	• • •	ï	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	• • •	• • •	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		1	• • •	16	7	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	60	65
	3.33				1.54						1.54		26.67	10.77		100.00	100.00
6	10	2		1	1	10	12	3	18	24	12	15	16	25	264	269	270
2.27	3.72	0.74		0.37	0.37	3.79	4.46	1.11	6.82	8.92	4.44	5.68	5.95	9.26	100,00	100.00	100.00
0.35	0.34	1.01	• •	• •	• •	47 16.49	19 6.42	2.36	16 5.61	2 0.68	• •	39 13.68	22 7.43	18 6.08	285 100.00	296 100.00	296 100.00
3	0.54	3		i	• • •	21	26	2.50	10	0.00		27	41	15	206	214	216
1.46	$0.4\hat{7}$	1.39	• • •	$0.4\hat{7}$	• • •	10.19	12.15	1.39	4.85	$0.4\hat{7}$	2.78	13.11	19.16	6.94	100.00	100.00	100.00
5	1	4				7	8	4	3			22	16	11	175	184	184
2.86	0.54	2.17				4.00	4.35	2.17	1.71	• :	• :	12.57	8.70	5.98	100.00	100.00	100.00
• •	• •	• •	• •	• •		• •	• •	• •	4.00	8	5	2	3	10.16	75	53	100.00
· .	· ;	iò	• •	.;	·i	4	'i	• •	4.00 22	15.09 29	6.76 24	2.67 18	5.66 10	12.16	100.00 154	100.00 104	100.00 104
5.84	4.81	9.62	• • •	2.88	0.96	2.60	0.96	• •	14.29	27.88	23.08	11.69	9.62	2.88	100.00	100.00	100.00
50	16	35	• • •	43	14	5	14	• • •	29	47	8	11	31	5	251	280	280
19.92	5.71	12.50		15.36	5.00	1.99	5.00		11.55	16.79	2.86	4.38	11.07	1.79	100.00	100.00	100.00
• •	1	5	• •	• •			4	3			18		9	16		29	60
• •	3.45	8.33	• •	٠:	;;	• •	13.79	15.00	• •	• •	30.00	• •	31.03	26.67	* *	100.00	100.00
• •	3.33	1.67	• •	6.67	16 26.67	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	3.33	• •	30 100.00	60 100.00
	3.33	1.07	• •	0.07	20.07		• •	• •	• • •	• • •	32	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	• •	19	• •	100.00	60
• •	•••	••		• • •			• • •	•••	••	••	53.33	••	•••	31.67	•••		100.00
. 137	80	109		63	34	145	183	57	134	135	134	212	311	219	2281	2491	2636
6.01	3.21	4.14		2,53	1.29	6.36	7.35	2.16	5.87	5.42	5.08	9.29	12.48	8.31	100.00	100.00	100.00

2 different parties (in percentages) 1962 — 1972

	CPI		(CPI (M)			SP∗		o	ther Part	ies	Independents		lents
1962	1967	1972	1962	1967	1972	1962	1967	1972	1962	1967	1972	1962	1967	1972
6.39	5.15	5.64		1.97	2.59	14.19	10.14	5.77	6.91	3.49		23.82	32.33	31.491
19.53	7.78	6.04	٠. م	7.61	3.01	0.91	0.57		0.40	0.27	1.82	20,47	26.41	32.00
6.23	6.93	7.02	•	1.27	1.59	19.40	24.58	16.08	4.60	3.51	3.84	8.40	17.88	10.60
0.18		0.47			0.23	7.77	3.70	1.00	3.43	0.08	0.89	12.02	10.19	12,28
	0.90	2.00		0.54	0.36		3.78	0.25		2.90	6.94		32.97	26.204
	2.89	1.97		0.39	1.15		0.13	0.07			3.78		38.10	31.48
5.90	4.87	2.75		1.08	0.79	7.73	8.69	4.59	12.96	14.46	11.51	16.75	14.56	16.61
2.02	1.11	1.04		0.23	0.04	15.45	9.96	6.25	8.54	2.36	0.18	17.56	14.85	15.05
2.28	0.52	0.97		1.10	1.01	15.08	11.35	1.65	5.66	0.81	0.16	17.32	28.17	12.46
5.40	0.97	1.56		1.18	0.96	5.14	5.57	2.44	2.35	0.80	0.68	20.88	16.27	17.57
	0.54	0.38			• •	1.92	0.98	0.05	23.69	20.46	7.30	7.43	8.55	26.27
7.10	5.27	6.51		3.19	3.25	2.29	1.23	0.94	16.12	26.47	28.81	17,17	15.76	12,43
24.96	6.53	13.22		18.11	27.61	5.02	4.01	0.81	10.71	14.60	7.262	10.98	13.49	
	5.47	10.14		0.67	0.66		12.47	5.36			20.21		48.85	30.83
	7.97	3.03		21.61	37.82		0.02				2.37		12.10	11.88
••	••	0.57	• • •	• •	••	• •			• •	• •	35.50			54.09
9.48	4.37	3.58		4.34	4.38	8.63	8.29	2.57	7.43	6.41	11.00	15.75	19.05	20.21

The heartlands

HAMDI BEY

LAST month's general elections to the assemblies of the Hindi-speaking States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, and ten by-elections in U.P., registered a major shift in public opinion since 1967. The shift was towards the Left-Centre and parties of the extreme Left were as much in disfavour as parties of the Right, whether close to the Centre like the Congress-O or further away like the Swatantra, the BKD and the Jana Sangh.

It is not necessary to go into the well-known details of the party position to substantiate the above conclusion. A reference to the table published at the end should be able to refresh the memory. The more important thing is to read in the table the reversal of a trend—the trend towards conservatism which had been noticeable since 1957 and which reached its peak in 1967. So far no detailed study of the conservative trend manifest in the growth of parties like the Jana Sangh, the Swatantra and SSP has been made.

Various factors might have contributed towards that trend, of which three strike me as important.

The pre-Independence Congress was a conservative party (vide Tılak's dıctum that social reform can wait till independence is achieved) and the tepid radicalism accepted by it after the 1922 Gaya session was largely to mobilize the people for the sake of achieving independence. Once the objective was achieved, the Congress need for social change disappeared. It tolerated Nehru as an idealist who could be most effectively countered by offering acquiesance while preparing for sabotaging his programme through dilatoriness and inaction. A spurious theory, bred through the hybridization of economic determinism and the Queen's 1858 Proclamation pledging noninterference in religious customs, was sedulously propagated: that economic development generally and industrialization particularly would automatically effect social changes.

On the other hand, conservative sections of the population, whose interests had been looked after by the British Government, had to meet the threat posed by representative government by organizing themselves and entering politics with ample funds and considerable influence.

Lastly, democratic socialism (and the most supposedly radical elements in the Congress were committed only to democratic socialism) all over the world had become panicky about the emergence of Russia as a super-power after World War II; and the effect of this panic in India was that democratic socialism was afraid of itself, lest activity may unleash forces it would not be capable of controlling and which may lead to communism.

The net result of the interplay of these three factors was that the Congress virtually repudiated its pre-Independence radicalism and thereby lost its driving force in a situation in which its earlier objective had already been achieved. There were no fresh goals to strive after. Economic development, like education in the 19th century, became the main hope for progress. It was a bureaucratic rather than a political approach and bureaucracies all over the world are susceptible to be alternately bullied and corrupted by pressure groups.

The parties of the Right became such pressure groups. They were not political parties which seriously aspired to replace the Congress as the ruling party. Hence, they did not develop an alternative leadership or an alternative programme till 1967 when their growth in stature and the decline of the purposeless Congress led to the Congress being robbed of majorities in U.P., Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The Congress could no longer run stable governments and in each State SVD coalition governments were formed. These were ad hoc unstable governments and, in U.P. and Bihar, mid-term polls in 1969 did not clear the situation appreciably.

We are concerned here mainly with the Hindi-speaking areas where politics after Independence has developed differently from Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu or Andhra. In our area, middleincome agrarian elements in collaboration with shopkeepers and the urban, but non-industrial, poor emerged as the most important political section of the population. These sections were drawn from a communitarian society which does not permit social mobility to individuals though it does allow some room for elevation to groups. The communitarian society was also a status society, which had for nearly 2,000 years been on the defensive against the penetration of economic influences which could free the individual of his dependence upon the community. It operated in groups—not groups of like-minded people for it had successfully resisted disruption of communitarianism when it was assailed by Vaishnavism, Shaivaism or the worship of Rama.

The groups were also not primarily economic although they were vocational in character. In essence, they were remnants of ethnic groups absorbed in a communitarian society, allocated economic pursuits in the shape of vocations, but governed by a ritual hierarchy which made nonsense of economic affluence. Hence, a place in the ritual hierarchy was more important for each group than economic affluence, though the latter was important to individuals within the group. Economic factors operated within the group, for a rich member was more respected than a poor member; the group could strive, because of economic affluence, after a higher status but the socially acceptable form of affluence was greater ritual purity. Even then no group could ask for a status higher than that of the Brahmin or Kshatriya who as castes did not engage in productive enterprise.

This lengthy description of the society in Hindi-speaking areas has been necessitated by the fact that politics here has been greatly influenced by caste. This society has determined political aims which are different from aims in other linguistic areas. And the satisfaction of these political aims has brought into existence two parties of national importance, the Jana

Sangh and the SSP, which are basically regional parties of the Hindi-speaking areas as much as the DMK is of Tamil Nadu.

The political aims determined by the communitarian status society are: (i) raising the status, rather than the intellectual wealth, of Hindi to that of English in which the partly deracinated urban elite is proficient, (ii) postponement of all structural changes in society, (iii) relegation of all social improvement to long-term economic development projects, (iv) the predominance of the symbolic (corresponding to the ritual) in matters of social reform, and (v) reduction of historical experience to mere typological enrichment in preference to allowing such experience to effect structural change.

The five political aims listed above represent an essentially conservative outlook in which westernization and modernization became status symbols and typological variants, and in which groups untouched by modernization (and they were more numerous than those touched by modernization) were constantly engaged in raising their status in the hierarchy through ritualization on the one hand and participation in politics on the other. Adoption of higher status rituals was largely made possible through the prosperity brought about by Plan expenditure and injection of money in the countryside of which a substantial part, between 30 per cent to 40 per cent, went to strengthen traditional institutions through expenditure under the head of social services. Universal adult suffrage enabled participation in politics.

Two essentially modern methods—Plan expenditure and adult suffrage—involved the traditional communitarian society in a modern situation. The self-sufficiency of the village was greatly disturbed by the entry of Plan money and, accompanying it national directives on crop patterns and inputs. Politics on the basis of adult suffrage ultimately led to legislation on, instead of observance of, custom.

There were other, more immediate concomitants. No group or caste,

seeking status through politics, was within an assembly or parliamentary constituency, numerous enough as to be in a position to disdain having to seek the cooperation of other groups or castes. It was not always possible to secure such cooperation while maintaining social distance. More and more with each of the five (in Bihar six) general elections, the inter-caste political cooperation had to be on terms of equality, or at least reduction of social distance for the duration of electioneering. It was a reforming situation, gradual and slow—in no way revolutionary and urgent—but its cumulative effects have been fairly important. Dynamism has entered a static society.

The social gulf between the elite castes (Brahmin and Kshatriya) and the Scheduled Castes (mainly Chamars, Pasis and Dusadhs) was sufficiently wide to induce the elite castes to encourage the Scheduled Castes at the expense of the middle-status castes. Since the politics of the middle castes was conservative and regional, the lower status castes had increasingly to ally themselves with national and liberal politics.

The conservative parties are the Jana Sangh, the SSP and the BKD. They are also regional parties of the Hindi-speaking areas. Swatantra is more properly a regional party of Gujarat and Bombay city, and disagrees with the other three only in regard to the pace of replacement of English by Hindi, but that does not constitute a national difference, and can be ascribed to the association with the Swatantra of rich English-educated groups. The SSP, in spite of its socialism and its various changes of nomenclature, is a party of the middle-income and middlestatus agrarian elements. The Jana Sangh is a party of the small shopkeeper and the urban non-industrial poor. The relationship between the Jana Sangh and the SSP is about the same as existed between Gandhism and Congress socialism of the thirties and forties. The BKD is a party of middle-status cultivators.

The conservative parties had the maximum electoral success in 1967

and 1969. Part of the success of the Jana Sangh and the SSP was due to the immediate reaction in the Hindi-speaking States to the creation of linguistic States in 1956. Linguistic regionalism had to be asserted in the Hindi-speaking areas also and the assertion was made by the Jana Sangh and the SSP. But Hindi also aspires to be the national language and there are limits to its assertion of regionalism. The emergence of Bangla Desh as a result of the imposition of Urdu in Pakistan has had a temporizing influence on the protagonists of Hindi in India.

The 1960s were also a decade of recurring communal riots. While the SSP can hide its regional character under a socialist mask, the Jana Sangh can attract attention at the national level by taking anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim postures. Once again, the breaking away of Bangla Desh from Pakistan has had a temporizing effect on those who hated Muslims. The BKD too had strong affiliations with the Arya Samaj, which never reconciled itself to the Muslim presence.

The Swatantra should not have been affected by the slump in the electoral dividends of the pro-Hindi and anti-Muslim attitudes, but as said earlier it does not really belong to the Hindi-speaking areas and has functioned here through mainly feudal agencies, virtually denying its ideological commitments to free trade and enlightened capitalism. Some of these agencies have provided only a temporary link; for example, in Bihar the local Janata Party (organized by an ambitious zamindar) was once an affiliate of the Swatantra, then of the unsplit Congress and, in the last election, of the Jana Sangh. Even in Rajasthan, which is contiguous to Gujarat, the home State of the party, the Swatantra exercises influence only through princely families. American policies in regard to Bangla Desh might have had some effect on Swatantra fortunes, for in the public eye the Swatantra pro-American and anti-Russian.

Bangla Desh played an important role in inducing a change in public opinion in Hindi-speaking States,

but it would be only right to notice that Bangla Desh itself was the result of a change in public opinion in East Bengal. An area which had sought separation from India on grounds of religion began in 1970 to emphasize secularism. The 1970 East Bengal elections were fought and won on a plank of secularism by the Awami League, reducing the Muslim League to a position of a nonentity represented only by a single legislator. It is also possible to say that even West Pakistan was touched by the spirit of secularism for it made a major concession to it in agreeing to joint electorates for the 1970 elections. There seems to be a sub-continental turning away from communalism in which the Hindi-speaking areas were also involved. Has communalism which led to partition spent itself out after having perverted politics for nearly 90 years? No definite answer, positive or negative, can be given at this stage.

So far, we have dealt with the broad general changes which have favoured the shift in public opinion noticed in the last elections. And these we have enumerated as: (i) increasing monetization of the countryside conducive to modernization, (ii) exhaustion of the possibilities of caste politics, (iii) weakening of Hindi linguism, (iv) weakening of communalism, (v) emergence of Bangla Desh, and (vi) dislike of the dubious policy followed by the USA in regard to Bangla Desh.

Now let us turn to the positive factors which enabled the Congress to recapture the public imagination after a long period of ambivalence. The split in the Congress in 1969 led to the parting of the ways between those who wanted to take up a programme of social change and those who put their greatest trust in inaction. The latter group wno in the last elections contested for assembly seats as Congress-O, were conservatives. They soon found themselves in proximity with the Jana Sangh, the SSP, the Swatantra and the BKD. For the 1971 Lok Sabha elections, a grand alliance between all these conservative parties was formed, but the Congress.

led by Mrs Gandhi, won a twothirds majority. The Hindi-speaking areas' contribution to that majority was substantial.

There was a feeling that the Congress—once more promising a return to pre-Independence radicalism, and this time the radicalism was not for mobilization of people for support to the struggle for Independence but for social change—may not be able to do as well in Assembly elections in which local personalities and local issues should count for more. But Mrs Gandhi eschewed all local issues from her campaigning and concentrated on national issues. The Congress seemed to have returned to the dynamism it had at the time of the 1936 and 1946 elections and the people's response has been as unmistakably clear as then. Then the vote was for Independence and now the vote is for secularism, modernization and social change.

The return to radicalism coincided with the attainment of maturity by the electorate explained earlier. The development of linguistic, regional and caste politics was an unavoidable phase in the transformation of a traditional ritual society into a modern political society, though the sociological pundits made many alarming noises.

As an observer close to the ground, whose visibility is limited by his situation, I do not feel certain that conservatism has been vanquished for ever. It has to find new expressions for we are all averse to change. We may notice that during the last elections, no Shankaracharya was active, nor was cow protection an issue. On the other hand, conservatives fraternized with the Muslims (whom they had persecuted previously) under the 'Bihari Bachao' slogan. In at least one city in the Hindispeaking area, but outside the States under review here, the Jana Sangh and the Muslim League had a working electoral arrangement which met with some success.

The conservatives will function as all conservatives have always done in changing societies. Thus far and no further, at each stage. At one time their slogan was Independence and no further. Their conservatism will find new expressions, but they can gain in popularity only if the Congress once again returns to the post-Independence inaction.

Superficially, the pattern of politics in Hindi-speaking areas after five general elections is similar to what it is in Britain and the USA. In each of them there is a ruling party—the Conservatives in Britain and the Democrats in the USA—but every fifteen or twenty years the Labour and the Republi-

cans get a term of office. The ruling party in India is the Congress; the agglomeration of conservatives consists of mere pressure groups who have not yet evolved an alternative programme and leadership to enable them to mature into a party and thus qualify for a term in office. The various experiments in SVD Governments and the 1971 electoral grand alliance, which continued in a shy manner in 1972, have not yet led to an alternative programme and leadership or the forging of a conservative party.

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TABLE

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		B	Sihar			
<i>PARTY</i>	1952	1957	1962	1967	1969	1972
CPI		7	12	23	25	35
C	235	210	185	128	118	167
C-O JS			3	26	34	30 25
Soc	23		7	68	50	33
Ind	16	18	12	33	60	15
		Uttar	Pradesh			
	(1	no general	election in	1972)		
CPI		9	14	13	4	
C	390	286	249	199	211	
JS Soc	2 19	17 44	49 24	98 44	49 33	
Swa			15	12	5	
BKD					98	
Ind	14	74	31	37	18	
		Madhy	a Pradesh			
	Ģ	no mid-terr	n poll in 19	69)		
CPI		2	1	1		3
C JS	258 2	232 10	142 41	168 78		220 48
Soc	16		14	10		7
Swa			2	7		
		Raja	esthan			
	(1		n poll in 19	69)		
CPI		1	5	I		4
C	110	119	88	89	arrow south	145
JS Soc	11	6	15 5	22 8		8 4
Swa	_	*********	36	49		11

Muslim politics

GOPAL KRISHNA

ONE treads on treacherous ground in writing about Indian Muslim politics. Their circumstances have made Indian Muslims defensive and extremely suspicious. Yet, an understanding of Indian Muslim politics is a matter of urgent national importance because the trends at work there will have large consequences for the nation.

Looking at the election data, imperfect though they are, one becomes aware of a discrepancy between the positions taken up by a large section of the Muslim political leadership and the manner in which Muslim voters exercise their franchise. The diversity of Muslim politics is obscured by the rhetoric of community solidarity.

It has been a part of Indian Muslim tradition to emphasize the distinctness of the Muslim community, and to seek to unify it politically by establishing common goals for Muslims which differ from those of the rest of the society. In the past, the tone was set by a leadership drawn largely from north India, where about 47 per cent of the Indian Muslim population lives. The ethos of this section of the community was presented as that of the whole and the issues relevant to it were made to seem relevant for all Indian Muslims. This slurring over of important differences has created a misunderstanding about the nature of Indian Muslim society.

We have also tended to accept the positions adopted by the most vocal sections of the Muslim political leadership as representing the views of the generality of the Muslim population. To cite only one example: the status of Urdu in north India has been represented as a Muslim cause, thus ignoring that for the Muslims in Assam and West Bengal as also in the South and the West it is an irrelevance. Because, the historically. Urdu-speaking Muslims took the lead in organising Indian Muslim politics, its ethos has been greatly coloured by their concerns. But, over the years, new political forces have been operating among the Muslims as they have been among the rest of the population. And, perhaps, it is these forces that determine the substance of Muslim politics at the constituency level. Here, the communal appeal possibly makes less impact than one would think from a perusal of the Muslim press. The electoral data amply bare out this hypothesis.

Accepting the rhetoric at its face value, students of Muslim politics have often made the mistake of treating the Indian Muslims as a single monolithic whole, moved by a common political purpose and acting as a unified political force. Nothing could be further from the truth. Muslim politics has always exhibited a double tendency; organizational plurality and a relatively uniform aspiration. There were even in the heyday of the dominance of the Muslim League, a plethora of competing Muslim political and semi-political organisations in the country, testifying to the pluralistic character of the Indian Muslim society.

There has, of course, been a widely shared urge for an auto-

nomous political existence for the Muslims, for a share in political power, and for a reassertion of dominance in the affairs of the nation. These aspirations lie behind the fervent advocacy by at least a section of Muslim opinion of building up a monolithic political unity deriving its strength from the religious brotherhood of the believers, on the basis of the claim that Islam is an ideology and Muslims as believers must constitute a single political entity. It is this complex situation of disparity between aspirations and political reality that has governed the strategies followed by the political leaders of Indian Muslims.

In the aftermath of partition, the strategies available to the Muslim political leaders were three: (1) to support the Congress Party and operate within it as a pressure group on behalf of Muslim interests; (2) to organize a specifically Muslim political party, or a federation of regional Muslim parties, to represent Muslim opinion and bargain with non-Muslim parties; and (3) to distribute Muslim support among different political parties on the basis of their willingness to accommodate and promote the interests of the community.

Given the context of Indian politics after partition, with the extinction of the Muslim League in north India and the hostility of non-Muslim opinion towards separatist Muslim politics, the best course for the Muslim leadership was to support the Congress, whose commitment to secularist politics, though parodied in pre-partition days, offered the best protection to Muslims in the altered circumstances.

This phase of Indian Muslim politics ended after 1962. The loosening grip of the Congress, the increasing incidence of communal violence, and the recovery of Muslim confidence as the depressive effects of partition gradually diminished, led to the re-emergence of Muslim communal politics. After having supported the Congress for over 15 years after independence, several Muslim politicians began to ask whether the interests of the

community could not be better served by building up a more autonomous position for the Muslims.

The fragmented party system in the country appeared to offer precisely the kind of possibility that the politically conscious Muslim looked for, namely, a situation in which Muslims, though a numerical minority, could emerge as a balancing force between the other political parties contending for power. This position of holding the critical balance would enable the Muslims to get their demands accepted, give them that sense of power necessary to safeguard their autonomy and enable them to influence the course of events in the light of their own interests and purposes.

This vision is not as unrealistic as it might at first seem, provided the Muslim community could be organised politically in a single party or a federation of local Muslim parties sharing a common political outlook, and the electoral system suitably altered to translate Muslim voting strength into legislative representation. Many difficulties have arisen on the way.

The new phase was marked by the emergence of the Muslim League in Kerala politics, its acti-vization in Tamil Nadu, which later led to an alliance with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, the growth of the Ittihad-ul-Musalmeen and Tamir-e-Millat in Hyderabad, and the formation of the Muslim Majlis in Uttar Pradesh. The Jamaat-e-Islami and the Tabliqh-i-Jamaat between them undertook the heroic task of keeping Muslims rooted in their faith, deepening the solidarity of the community and preventing its secularization and modernization. In August 1964, these various groups, along with the traditionally pro-Congress Jamait-ul-Ulema. formed the Muslim Mailis-e-Mushawarat as a federal organization of Muslim political, social and religious bodies, all concerned for the well-being of Indian Muslims.

The common programme of all the avowedly Muslim organizations was to secure for the Muslims due representation in the legislative bodies, to obtain official status for Urdu in the north Indian States, to preserve the Muslim character of the Aligarh Muslim University and to prevent Parliament from interfering with the Muslim personal law.

By the time the 1967 elections came round, the non-Congress section of the Muslim leadership had decided that, since the Congress had failed to give satisfaction to the Muslims with regard to any of the community's demands, they would follow a combination of the second and the third strategies listed above: set up candidates of their own and support opposition candidates on the basis of their willingness to support the Muslim causes.

How far this strategy succeeded in giving the Muslims the kind of role they were seeking is far from clear, but what is obvious is that Muslim representation in the States declined, and this was mainly on account of the electoral losses suffered by the Congress. Muslim intervention against the Congress led to the election of several Jana Sangh members to the Lok Sabha, and while some Muslims may have had the satisfaction of punishing the Congress, it in no way served the interests of the community. All the issues which agitated the Muslim remained where they were. The riots of enormous ferocity which occurred in western India in 1969 and 1970 highlighted the urgent problem of security of the life and property of Muslims.

One does not know what shape Muslim politics would have taken if Mrs. Gandhi had not brought about an altogether new political alignment which restored to the Congress Party the support of the entire Muslim community. The old alliance was restored in 1971, but with a major difference. This time the Muslim leadership believed that the Muslims had acquired a genuine leverage with the Congress Party and their demands could no longer be ignored. In addition, at least in two States, in Kerala on a more stable basis and in West Bengal only temporarily, the Muslim League came to enjoy the much coveted balancing position in State

politics giving Muslims a real sense of power.

· Unfortunately for Muslim political ambitions, during the one year between the elections to the Lok Sabha in March 1971 and to the State Assemblies in March 1972 most of these advantages were lost. To students of Muslim politics, the crucial significance of the 1972 State elections lies in the open breach between the Congress and the more vocal sections of Muslim political opinion. At the root of this breach lay the resentment these people felt over the Indian role in bringing about the emergence of Bangla Desh, and the unusually firm refusal of Mrs. Gandhi to make any concession on the question of the so-called 'Bihari' elements in Bangla Desh.

The position adopted by the non-Congress Muslim leadership was one of unremitting opposition to the Congress. The Muslim League manifesto declared, 'There is no question of supporting the Congress (R) . . .', and the sectarian Muslim press advised Muslims to vote for the opposition parties, including the Jana Sangh, to prevent the Congress victory at the polls. The virulence of attacks on the Prime Minister in the columns of Radiance indicate the depth of hostility the sectarian Muslim felt towards her and her party.

How did the Muslims vote in the end? The short answer must be: one does not really know. The two States in which the Muslim League has an organization and following, namely Kerala and Tamil Nadu, did not go to the polls. The State with the largest concentration of Muslim population, Uttar Pradesh, which accounts for about 23 per cent of the Muslim population of the Indian Union, also did not have an election. The Kashmir area, about which one can say something more definite, forms a distinct case and though it has great impact on Indian Muslim opinion, Kashmir politics do not form as yet an integral part of Indian Muslim politics.

We know very little about how Muslims have voted in these or previous elections, what governs their voting decisions, which parties they prefer, whether they shift their party preferences, and if some of them do, how many and why do they do so, what regional variations are observable in their voting behaviour. There are vague opinions held on all these, some of which are relatively better grounded, while others constitute mere guess work. The results of field surveys are not yet available, and aggregate data do not tell us much about the way a particular section of the electorate has voted.

What we do know is the number of Muslim candidates who contested the elections, and if one makes the not altogether unreasonable assumption that Muslim candidates stand from those constituencies which have a sizeable Muslim electorate, and the far shakier assumption that Muslim votes go mainly to Muslim candidates, then perhaps one can draw some inferences regarding the way Muslims have voted. This exercise is not worth a great deal. More reliable estimates could be made from polling booth returns, but these are no longer compiled by the Election Commission.

The only voting behaviour survey carried out in 1967, whose results have yet to be made public. shows that out of a national sample of 210 Muslim male electors, 46.8 per cent voted for the Congress, and-39.7 per cent for the opposition. The study further shows that 39.0 per cent of the Congress Muslim voters showed strong preference for the party, while 11.4 per cent had only weak preference for it. In an election in which the Congress Party did not do very well, getting only 40 per cent of the votes polled in the country, the support it received from the Muslim electorate was not small, especially in the context of the determined opposition mounted against it by several leaders of Muslim opinion. How the Congress fared in areas of Muslim concentration cannot be said from the data currently available.*

We have perforce to confine our enquiry then to Muslim candidates

only. In the States that went to the poll in March 1972, excluding Jammu and Kashmir, 644 Muslim candidates contested 393 seats, against 543 candidates contesting 351 seats in 1967, thus continuing the trend of more seats being contested by an increasing number of Muslim candidates over the past four elections. This could be taken as a measure of growing involvement, and perhaps trust, in democratic politics. Muslims have contested from constituencies with relatively small concentrations of Muslim voters and have received substantial non-Muslim support, without which many of them could not possibly have been elected.

The highlight of the 1972 election from the point of view of Muslim politics was the endeavour on the part of the Muslim League to extend its activity to north India. There was a split between the Muslim Majlis and the Muslim League leadership on this question, and disregarding Dr. Faridi's opposition, the Muslim League established its branches in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, presented candidates for the Metropolitan Council in Delhi, and entertained ambitions of emerging as a balancing force in West Bengal. The largest bloc of Muslim voters to go to the polls in north India was in Bihar where they were agitated over the question of the future of the Urdu-speaking population in Bangla Desh.

Muslims constitute a significant proportion of the population, and therefore of the electorate, in Assam (25 per cent), West Bengal (20 per cent) and Bihar (12.45 per cent). Elsewhere their numbers are small, and though they live in sizeable pockets and can influence the outcome of electoral contests in several constituencies, their leverage is on the whole marginal. Above all, Muslims do not vote as a bloc—at least that seems to be the conclusion that emerges from a detailed investigation of the 1972 election results.

Let us see the pattern of constituencies, candidates and their parties.

Of the 877 Muslim candidates who contested the 1972 elections, in all

^{*}I am indebted to my colleague, Bashir Ahmed, for providing me with the survey data from the study he and my other colleagues at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies carried out in 1967.

the States that went to the polls, 218 were set up by the Congress, 57 by Congress (O), 39 by the Socialist Party, 39 by the CPI (M), 22 by the CPI, 17 by the Swatantra Party, 30 by the Muslim League, 23 by Jamaat-e-Islami, 7 by Jana Sangh, 3 by the Socialist Unity Centre, 2 each by the R.S.P., the Forward Bloc, and the Republican Party of India, 3 by the Shoshit Dal, 5 by the Manipur People's Party and one each by the B.K.D., the Akali Dal and the Peasants' and Workers' Party; there were 404 Independents. The spectrum of opinion and political affiliation this reveals is very wide.

The results are equally interesting. Between them, these 877 candidates contesting from 478 constituencies won 203 seats. The party distribution was as follows: Congress 150, CPI 9, CPI (M) 2, Socialist Party 2, Socialist Unity Centre 1, R.S.P. 1, Congress (O) 5, Jana Sangh 2, Manipur People's Party 3, Jamaat-e-Islami 5, Muslim League 2, Independents 21.

The 1972 results have produced a better Muslim representation in the State legislatures than ever before. In the Muslim minority States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mysore, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal there will be 140 Muslim legislators against 90 in 1967. This change has been brought about mainly by the electoral gains made by the Congress. Of the 140 Muslim legislators, 109 belong to it.

With this enlarged representation, the gap between the proportion of the Muslims in the population and their share in the legislatures has been narrowed: against 10.70 per cent in the population, Muslim representation in the State legislature will be 7.45 per cent.

From the point of view of the sectarian Muslim politician, of course, this form of representation has little meaning. And there is substance in this view. In what way can a Congress Muslim, or a Muslim legislator belonging to the Communist Party or any of the other Left parties, be said to repre-

sent the Muslims? For the Muslim faithful the 'true' Muslim representative must be a faithful like himself; at a minimum he must be elected by the Muslim voters alone. Those elected by a mixed electorate cannot claim to represent the community. The 'true representatives' identified in this manner so far are: 3 Independents elected from Hyderabad, who belong to the Ittihadul-Muslimin, 5 from Kashmir, belonging to the Jamaat-e-Islami, 2 belonging to the Muslim League (one from Delhi and the other from West Bengal), and two Independents elected to the State Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra from Bombay.

The present political system cannot accommodate the communal point of view of the Muslim organizations like the Jamaat-e-Islami, the Muslim League or the Ittihad-ul-Musalmeen. It is quite clear that there are severe limits to the electoral potential these bodies command, or can mobilize under the present electoral system, which is based on the principle of representation of constituencies and not of religious communities.

The 1972 elections have demonstrated that despite the virulent opposition of the Muslim sectarian, Muslim voters have voted in large numbers for the Congress. A close scrutiny of the constituency-wise results in three States with a substantial Muslim population, viz., Assam, Bihar and West Bengal, show that Muslims must have voted by and large for the Congress and the other secular parties, and much less for the Muslim League or for Independents sharing its approach.

In Assam, in 29 constituencies with a substantial Muslim vote, the dominance pattern was: 20 Congress, 7 Independents, 1 CPI (M) and 1 Socialist. In Bihar, of the 17 such constituencies Congress was dominant in 8 and the CPI, the Socialist Party and the Congress (O) in two each, and Independents in three. In West Bengal, of the 64 such constituencies, Congress dominated in 40, the CPI (M) in 12, the CPI in 3, the RSP and the SUC in two each, the Muslim League in 2, Independents in 2 and Forward

Bloc in one. The pattern is not very different in other States. In Madhya Pradesh, 4 of the 5 constituencies with a sizeable Muslim vote have gone to the Congress, and the 5th to the CPI. From Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Mysore, Punjab and Rajasthan, 40 out of 47 seats contested by Muslims have gone to the Congress, 2 to the CPI, and only 5 to the candidates of sectarian Muslim persuasion.

If these results are any guide to the political preferences of the Muslim electorate, we could conclude that the Muslim electorate by and large supports the Congress and the secular parties. That this electorate has been heavily penetrated by secular forces is now beyond question. The competitive politics and the process of modernization have inevitably begun to create a differentiated political opinion among the Muslims. To this process the Muslim sectarians made an unwitting contribution during the 1972 election. In an endeavour to defeat the Congress they advised the Muslims to vote for the opposition parties, including the Jana Sangh. How far this appeal succeeded one does not know, but there have been reports of Muslims voting for the Socialist Party, the Congress (O) and the Jana Sangh in large numbers in Bihar.

In West Bengal, a large number of Muslims have voted for the CPI (M) and the CPI. This political fragmentation of the Muslim electorate is perhaps an even more important result, from the point of view of the secularization of Indian politics, than the obvious defeat of the Muslim League and its allies.

Neither Muslim sectarians nor their critics have yet taken note of the changes that have come about in the political orientations of the Muslim voters. The sectarian must deny these changes because they destroy the very basis of his politics. For those committed to the secularization of Indian politics and to the integration of the Muslims within the broad framework of a democratic secular political society, the 1972 election results hold promise.

Left formations

SOM BENEGAL

THE near obliteration of the Left parties in the 1972 State elections, as in the 1971 general election, with the massive victories of the Congress Party is, upon closer examination, more cataclysmic than catastrophic. A euphoric sense in the Congress ranks which has suffused itself among the people at large makes it appear as though the nation has bid goodbye to the more

militant forms of Left thought, as of the Right, and has settled down firmly to Mrs. Gandhi's equable, good-natured socialism. But this is not so.

Even though the Left parties have lost the day it need not be the final end of all of them. No more than the stunning defeats suffered by Congress in 1967 sealed the fate

of that party for all time to come. The final end may have come for the indiscriminate pot-pourri of parties that clutter the Left spectrum. They have been ineffectual in Indian politics save to split votes and cause occasional marginal damage. Even the Socialist Party may be on the way out. It never played much of a role being without a manifest ideology, direction or leadership. Its fortunes have been on the wane and in the present elections it retains some sort of identity only in Bihar.

The CPI has made some gains but only within the penumbra of the Congress. The radicalism of the CPI was long ago spent by its close identity with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. If Mrs. Gandhi maintains her rapport with the Soviet Union, it can hope to figure in the periphery of her establishment or even to infiltrate it. But, whether it can overwhelm the Congress is extremely dubious. Respectable establishment communists are no communists except for their jargon. If she enlarges that rapport it will even be difficult to distinguish whether the CPI is a separate identity, or merely servitor adjunct of the Congress.

In so far as all these parties are concerned, Mrs. Gandhi outwitted them by the shrewd and determined manner in which she first isolated and then extirpated the cognisable Right reactionary elements in her party and gave it a new sense of socialist radicalism and urgency in meeting the monumental problems of the people. The way in which she then went on to tackle the monstrous problem of Bangladesh with calm resoluteness, unerring judgment, impeccable timing and imaginative daring-winning a war, bringing down a despicable dictatorship, rebuffing American imperialism and liberating a people, thereby catapulting the country into a reckonable power and infusing pride into her people, could only arouse their strongest emotions.

The promise of greatness, stability and social advancement which she thus held out was irresistible.

The nation, by and large, except in a few pockets, notably West Bengal, Kerala and parts of Andhra Pradesh, has never in the quarter of a century since Independence shown any marked preference for radical Left ideology. This may be due either to the innate desire for orderly progress, or to the inept nature of Left leadership and strategy, or to the unequal struggle which Left parties have waged against the powerful engineering of conservative and Right forces which, by a ceaseless barrage of propagandist and other devices at their command, can condition men's minds to their will. The peasant and working classes, though they constitute the overwhelming majority of India's millions, are no match for the entrenched ruling elite of the country.

Howsoever popular the vote in India's democratic elections, the fact remains that ultimate power still vests in this ruling class of political, commercial and bureaucratic interests which are far removed from the mainstream of Indian life and which do not sympathise with the common social vision and social objectives of the millions of this On the contrary, these country. infinitesimal alienated groups, exercising power out of proportion, either through the mandate received from the people but distorted for their own self-seeking, or from the sanctuary of privilege also for their self-advancement, are chiefly concerned overtly or covertly with subverting the struggle for the equality of man and of his right to a free society of free and equal opportunity and reward.

Instead, they seek, while loudly applauding and acclaiming socialist ideas, in fact, to perpetuate an order based on privilege and hierarchy, social stratification and manipulation of the nation's wealth to their advantage. Their condescension toward the masses of the people is complete and irrevocable.

India's electorate, though shrewd and discerning in their judgment of individuals and broad trends, have not always voted for what seems ultimately in their own immediate self-interest. They have voted for a blend of idealism and pragmatism. That blend appears to be a stable party with a progressive

programme—this time, the Congress of Indira Gandhi.

But whether Mrs. Gandhi's leftcentrism will survive the challenges ahead remains to be seen. It will be severely tested in the days to come. On the one hand, she will have to contend with the crushing brake-power of the ruling elite. On the other, despite radical slogans and radical programmes, there has been a torrential re-entry into her party of the anti-socialist elements who had quit the Congress at the time of the split, and there are also those luke-warm remnants who stayed on whose adherence to socialist ideals is at best tenuous if not altogether hostile. An everpresent peril exists that they may water down socialist goals if they do not positively strain to bend the party away from them. Much, therefore, depends on how effectively Mrs. Gandhi will be able to hold out against these elements or whether she intends to eliminate them piecemeal at opportune moments and how far the few dedicated socialist cadres in the party will be able to sustain her efforts.

Although it is said that the Congress has emerged with monolithic stature, it is by no means a monolithic party nor does it wield monolithic authority. Mrs Gandhi's charisma has a powerful hold on the diverse elements in the party's leadership and the rank and file. But the party's socialist ideals and programme do not have a comparable charisma. The bandwagon syndrome, as we have seen, has also drawn in a large segment of the membership. If Mrs. Gandhi had lost out in the leadership struggle at the time of the split, it would be interesting to know how many of her present followers would have stood by her through thick and thin, to await the day of the counter-attack and victory. The frangible loyalty and discipline of her partymen shows up even on such trivial occasions as nominations to the State elections and voting in the Rajya Sabha election. Are Congressmen capable of the formidable rigours, privations and self-denials of a Long March to socialism? Nowhere is a gradual, easy transition to socialism possible, even less so in impoverished developing countries like India.

To believe that socialism is a desirable goal so long as it does not touch one personally is to live in a world of fantasy. And yet that appears to be the credo of large numbers of Congressmen. As the rising expectations of the people gain ground and the movement toward socialism (or 'garibi hatao', to reduce the problem to its most simplistic level) intensifies, the need for resolute action will become imperative. There will then be no place for waverers and the faint of heart. Sharp conflicts will arise, on the one hand inside the Congress and on the other with the ruling elite outside the party, the true commitment of everyone will stand exposed, and a show-down will become inevitable. A truly revolutionary situation will then arise. Extreme forms of struggle will be necessary.

The British form of parliamentary democracy which we are saddled with was not designed to meet nor absorb this kind of situation. The Congress will have to energise itself on even more radical lines. On the other hand, the infinite capacity of our people to accept endless suffering may assert itself and all great purpose come to nought. Herein lies the pitfall, the challenge and the opportunity of a party like the CPM, which we have hitherto not dealt with.

In the recent elections, the CPM has not done as badly as might at first appear, depending upon how one looks at the result. True, in terms of seats won, the party has done miserably. In West Bengal where it had the highest stake it has suffered grievously. The excuse of rigging, intimidation, goondaism and other electoral malpractices which Comrade Jyoti Basu is so pathetically hawking round the country can carry only limited credibility. Nothing is being said about the fact that the CPM now. like the united CPI on past occasions, went against the national tide on the Bangladesh question and on centre-state relations. Nor has any word been uttered on the barren self-annihilating feud with the CPM-L which cost so many lives and distorted the larger struggle, nor the meaningless terror let loose against those who might have been the allies of the party but were in fact alienated from it.

Despite all this, the party actually gained in its percentage of votes or maintained them in several constituencies like Chapdani and Joynagar. The overall fall was only 4.84 per cent. Most impressive of all is the fact that 3,659,763 people voted for the CPM alone not counting its allies. This, then, is the hard core of CPM supporters unswerving in their loyalty to the party. This is more than a quarter of the valid votes polled and one-fifth of the total electorate.

In terms of seats gained the picture is interesting. With 3.659 million votes the CPM has 15 seats while with a bare 1.110 million votes the CPI has 35 seats and with 6.542 million votes the Congress has 217 seats. This is the peculiar arithmetic of our elections. Apart from the scatter effect, when too many candidates field a constituency, distorting the result as related to representation, the floating vote of the uncommitted which is wide in our democracy can play havoc in the end.

This is the pitfall of the CPM. The opportunity it has lies in the days to come when it can force the Congress to live up to its socialist aims. And the challenge before it is to wean back the uncommitted, if not the entire majorty, to its side.

But a larger issue poses itself before the CPM, and indeed of any party whose mainspring is Marxism-Leninism. How can a Marxist-Leninist party whose clear-cut and avowed aim is the defeat and elimination of imperialist-capitalist interests, the downfall of monopoly, the setting up of the dictatorship of the broad working masses and the revolutionary transformation of society to socialism, ever hope to achieve these aims through the existing order and its apparatus, through a parliamentary system and through a Constitution that negates its every purpose? Will such a Marxist-Leninist party not end up as a party of reformism?

This had been foreseen clearly half a century ago by the Comintern Congress at Turin. Revolutionary fervour, the Turin Congress pointed out, would be diminished as communists got involved in parliamentary duties and they would end up as being reformists and even tools of the existing order. Barely twelve years ago, it had been recognised in the Moscow Statement that Marxist-Leninist parties are completely apart from reformists and those who deny the necessity of socialist revolution'. Or, again, that Leninism teaches, and experience confirms, that the ruling classes never relinquish power voluntarily.' The task of Marxist-Leninist parties is to head the struggle of the working class, the masses of working people, for the establishment of the socialist revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Running counter to these formulations, the united CPI and later the split parties, have tried the strategy of socialist transformation through the parliamentary system. The initial electoral victory in Kerala was no doubt unique in the history of communist parties but the experience soon after revealed the barrenness of the experiment. Nevertheless, the attempt persisted. The experience in West Bengal with an even more smashing victory was, if anything, even more disastrous. The existing order would simply not countenance any radical change not just because of natural hostility but because the very system, the law, the apparatus were designed against it.

Far from initiating any major actions towards social and economic justice by breaking the strangle-hold of the capitalist, compradore and kulak classes, even the mildest moves have brought the party in sharp conflict with the Constitution or the Centre. Thus the CPM has only two choices. Either it must cease to be a Marxist-Leninist party and suffer the fate of the CPI or it must take to other ways of achieving its aims. The leopard must discard its spots and become a lamb or it must act like a leopard.

Affluent regions

ALOO J. DASTUR

INDIA went to the polls once more and voted predictably. If the last year the result was astounding, this year's calculation did not go amiss. The voter obliged both the forecasters and the pollsters. It was a foregone conclusion that the Congress would sweep the polls; hence, the dullness, even absence, of an election campaign. In the past, election time was literally a time of political education and political debate between parties. Last year and last month we witnessed elections where issues were hardly debated, where the voter was hardly approached; there was total reliance on the Prime Minister's popularity. And western India was no exception.

There was a time when it was generally believed, and not without cause or significance, that Bombay was the political borometer of India. If this dictum holds good today, then, in Bombay, the attitude of the ruling party was that the election was to be won not by propaganda or canvassing among the voter but by plastering the walls of the metropolis with attractive photos of the Prime Minister. Indira Gandhi was more modest, she left nothing to chance but covered as much of the electoral field as she could. The more sensitive areas she visited more than once; Gujarat was one such, so was Maharashtra where within the Congress Party there was a pre-election rift and even defiance. Mysore was another State which had to be carefully nurtured.

These three States have always been Congress dominated and Mysore has not even experienced the trauma or frustration that Maharashtra and Gujarat did during the movement for the break-up of the old Bombay State into its language units. Maharashtra links up with the other two and has been having acute differences with both. The Narbada river valley project is stalled by Maharashtra although the river runs a bare eleven miles through its territory and thrice in a decade has devastated vast areas of Gujarat. With Mysore the trouble is over the city of Belgaum which has a substantial Marathispeaking population. Both these contentious issues are at a low ebb and were not election scoring points.

The three States again had fallen foul of the Prime Minister during the Presidential election of 1969. All the three had plumbed for Sanjiva Reddy; it was only the communist or socialist opposition parties that voted for Giri. Y. B. Chavan, who even in the Congress Parliamentary Board had opted for Reddy and set his State into doing the same, soon made his peace with the Prime Minister. At the Shibir convened by the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee he led the State Congress in making amends and lined it up with the winning side. Gujarat and Mysore continued out of step and when the Congress split, the lines of cleavage

in Western India were sharply drawn.

The three States were well administered; Gujarat, in particular, acquired the enviable reputation of being possibly the least corrupt. There was no 'land-grabbing' by the ministers; land legislation had made a good beginning. Within a decade its per capita income increased and it stood fourth, immediately after Maharashtra; Mysore's standing is ninth, although of the three it is the only one to record an increase at constant prices; but unlike the other two it is below the national average.

The mid-term poll of 1971 broke the back of the Congress (O) in both these States. In Mysore all the 27 seats fell to the Congress and Veerendra Patil, who had an unblemished record as Chief Minister. tendered his resignation. This was followed by what he called 'a gold rush' of his erstwhile colleagues and followers to join the Congress; within one week (15-22 March) its strength jumped from 57 to 120. Devraj Urs, who had early switched his allegiance to the Congress, deprecated all defections and criticised 'the horse-trading' that his party indulged in. He had been out of office for some time and his attempts at projecting a new image, not only personal but of the infant party he was leading, succeeded. Within the party, Seedeveerappa, who led the legislature party, was not averse to large-scale defections if only a government under his leadership could be formed. Battle lines between the two came to be drawn.

In Gujarat, the Congress (O) decline was not so steep as it managed to secure half the number of seats for Parliament; but it knew it was down the slippery road. Hitendra Desai tarnished both his own public image and the record of the government when he expanded his small cabinet—Gujarat had a mini-cabinet as compared with the other States—and took in members of the Swatantra Party in mid-March, after the Congress President, Jagjiwan Ram, had stated that his party would help the Swatantra Party to topple the government

This was the beginning of the end of the Congress (O) in Gujarat; three months later he resigned and as with Mysore, Governor's rule was clamped on the State.

It is unjust to say that issues were joined between the two antagonists. Rather, the old party fought for survival; the new worked for resuscitation and ceased to be squeamish about the quarters from which support was forthcoming. Swatantra members were welcome in the Congress fold; the Praja Socialists merged with it and the new Congress took on the looks of the old. When State elections were ordered, it looked forward with confidence.

The pre-election period threw up new issues and Maharashtra witnessed in-fighting not known even when the former Home Minister, D. S. Desai, resigned a couple of years ago. The question of postelection leadership was raised and Marathwada legislators laid claim to the Chief Ministership. The Nagpur Agreement was invoked; Vidarbha had given two Chief Ministers and in these days when much is said for uplifting the lowly and the suppressed, a backward region like Marathwada should be given its due.

Another and more compelling reason advanced for a change at the top was that Chief Minister Naik had successfully resisted clamping land-ceiling on rural areas. Could he when it was public knowledge that he and Chavan had large landholdings in the names of their wives and other family members? This should have struck a responsive chord in any socialist heart and good men and true should have supported Shankarrao Chavan in his frontal attack. But not so; Y. B. Chavan came forth with open support of Naik. He had been the undisputed leader of Maharashtra; the final arbiter and mediator in disputes between factions. role now passed to the Prime Minister. Chavan came to be identified with a faction.

Congress politics in the State became curiouser and curiouser. There was a socialist forum functioning under Tukidas Jadhav,

D. R. Chavan, Union Minister of State, with the support of Khadilkar. Now, a rival socialist forum was forged by Mohan Dharia, known to be very close to Chavan, Sharad Powar and others to rival the first. The Union Finance Minister supported it. And, yet, Dharia had the temerity publicly to suggest that Naik should stand down. The Prime Minister, as is her wont, kept the party guessing; now she seemed to favour one, now the She accepted Shankarrao other. Chavan's plea that he should get better representation in the State Parliamentary Board. But within days she allowed herself to be pursuaded by Naik that he would, if allowed to head the ministry, again introduce land reforms.

Never before had aspirants for the 'ticket', their supporters and promoters invaded Bombay as they did on this occasion. More than a couple of thousands held a 'mela' day after day. The Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committees took some time to finalise the list; but it came to be revised in a big way in Delhi and even those who had actively opposed the party's nominees in the Lok Sabha election the previous year were given party tickets. Was this to cut Chavan down to size, to show that his writ no longer runs in the Maharashtra Congress?

The socialist pretensions of the M.P.C.C. were exposed when in the final list those backed by the 'sugar syndicate', the newly rich peasants, constituted a substantial proportion. Shankarrao Chavan was flattered only to be deceived; Naik's men ultimately were in a majority. In keeping with the directive from above, fair representation given to the weaker sections of the community and to women. The Maratha caste-cluster's stranglehold over the MP.C.C. came to be weakened. The local selection committee could not decide on a large number of candidates and it was the Prime Minister who not merely filled in the gaps but rejected several including ministers, and provided substitutes. When there was a revolt of rejected applicants. the M.P.C.C. expelled as many as

42 members for opposing Congress nominees.

The M.P.C.C. escaped the fate meted out to other PCC's elsewhere. But the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee was not so fortunate. To the surprise of Bombaymen, the old committee was replaced by an ad hoc body presided over by a new convert to Congress politics, Rajni Patel; among the Vice-Presidents are a former communist and an aide of Subash Chandra Bose while in Berlin. It is a motley group, recently made still more so by the warm welcome given to Nana Chudasama, ex-Swatantra Party. In keeping with its new leftist stance it suggested that a local fisherman be one of its candidates. Incidentally, the fishing community of Bombay is not poor; it is wealthy; but ultimately he was not selected.

It was conceded that Maharashtra and Bombay would give the Congress a massive majority. Yet, the opposition parties harboured hopes that they might just cash in a little on the in-fighting in the Con-In Bombay, even hardboiled Congressmen were afraid of the Shiv Sena; Namjoshi, the President of the B.P.C.C. changed his constituency which he had nursed and served well for a decade. The Peasants and Workers Party, well entrenched in certain parts of Maharashtra and the Socialist Party in Ratnagiri, both believed they would fare well.

In Gujarat and Mysore, Congress (O) displayed arrant optimism in spite of the fact that the Congress somehow, anyhow, had built itself up. If it welcomed the Leftists, the erstwhile fellow-travellers, it hap-pily took into its fold the Rightists from the Swatantra Party. The most glaring illustration is that of Jaideepsinh of Baria. Leader of the Swatantra Legislative Party, when he failed to topple the Hitendra Desai Government, he switched his allegiance and became for a very short time a minister in the government which he tried with Congress help to dislodge. When the government resigned, he, with equal facility, became a member of the Congress. There was intense local opposition to his admission but the Congress High Command

admitted him and he took with him to the Congress a large number of defectors. Even this second phase as Congressman was shortlived as he quit the party in less than two months when the ticket was denied by the local body. In a land teeming with quick-change political performers, a man like Jaideepsinh is in a class by himself.

he pre-election tug-of-war presented an unedifying spectacle. In Saurashtra, specially Rajkot, there was a minor revolt over the tickets; even local M.P.'s like Jadeja declined to campaign for official candidates. The 'ticket issue' assumed large proportions because several 'leaders' had a common targetthe Chief Ministership; and they desired naturally that their followers and supporters should be given tickeis. In Maharashtra the struggle was between the incumbent and the challenger; here there was no incumbent; hence the free for all Chimanbhai Patel, Vice-President of the Guiarat Pradesh Congress Committee, had rallied round him those who had failed to get office when ad hoc committees were appointed.

Congress (O) took the election seriously hoping that its earlier good image would stand the impact of Indira Gandhi's personal popularity. The general belief was that the Congress (O) was Bapu's Congress and the Gujarati voter would give it a big hand. It took courage from the fact of the break-up of the Majoor Mahajan and severance with the Indian National Trade Union Congress; the newly-born National Labour Party gave it some muscle after the previous year's 'grand alliance' fell apart. Moreover, it had no issue to place before the people; it could elaborate no propaganda points. It could only seek solace that nearly sixty Congress rebels were also in the field.

The Swatantra Party had gathered strength in the State and the Patel community had by and large transferred its allegiance to it. Among its other top men were retired civil servants and princes. In 1967 it gave the united Congress a fight and almost ran neck to neck. It formed the largest State opposition in the country and gave

students of Indian politics the idea and hope that Gujarat was emerging as a two-party State. Hitendra Desai gradually eroded the opposition; and later with the Congress split the Swatantra members also began to defect to the new ruling party. Even before the elections it was reduced to a rump and its national leadership realised it had no future.

As elsewhere in the country, the Jana Sangh used the election to try and fan out in the districts and villages and its small but dedicated cadre of workers and volunteers began for the first time to try and sink roots in the State. The feeble Praja Socialist Party gave up the pretence of separate existence and its leaders joined the Congress. The Socialist Party, however, made a symbolic gesture of setting up 15 candidates.

In Mysore, the picture was somewhat similar. Congress (O) took the State seriously and expected to be the main and effective opposition. The election issues it chose were non-issues like the Cauvery waters dispute and the Mysore-Maharashtra boundary problem. This again shows that it continues to live in the past and neither sees a future nor has a future. It pinned its hope on the record of the Veerendra Patil government and his personal popularity. As in Gujarat, so in Mysore neither Hitendra Desai nor Veerendra Patil contested; the plea was they wanted to work for the party; but it had a demoralising effect on the party cadres and prospects.

It was only in Mysore that the Congress' reached an understanding with the Communist Party and allotted to it four seats. In Gujarat and Maharashtra it was locked in electoral battle. It gained by the alliance since none of its four candidates succeeded.

All conceded, the Congress would win; but the question-mark was thereafter, what? The confidence it cultivated when it swept the electoral board in 1971 was its greatest asset and Congress (O)'s greatest set-back. D. Devraj Urs had emerged as the most powerful man in the Congress in the short span of a year. He did not contest to

supervise the campaign and map the strategy. He desired to give a new dimension to his party and project a totally different image. He took a calculated risk in selecting the candidates, giving the minorities and backward classes greater representation.

In this process the politically dominant castes—the Lingayats and Vokkaligas—foundered recently enunciated theory of 'distributive justice'. In Mandhya district, however, it submitted to pressure and nominated only Vokkaligas except for the reserved seat. Elsewhere, too, it could not always resist well-entrenched interests. A major criticism, not substantiated by Congressmen themselves, was that the Brahmins were again being politically resurrected and Muslims and women ignored. More pertinent was the near eclipse of the followers of the Railway Minister, Hanumanthava and Krishnappa. This kept politics in a fluid state. But, of course, the best bet was Indira Gandhi. She took no chances and made a hectic helicopter tour of the State.

In all three States, the result was a foregone conclusion. The Congress was strong, it had resources, it took advantage of the victory in war and India's enhanced prestige; its opponents were demoralised though they appeared to put on a bold front. Barring the short-lived Swatantra opposition in Gujarat after 1967, there was no opposition worth its name anywhere. The results reverted to the old pattern and all opposition, even the strained effort of Congress (O) in Gujarat and Mysore, was mowed down.

Maharashtra gave the Congress the biggest hand with 56.3 per cent of the vote bagging 82.2 per cent of the seats—222 out of 270. Gujarat improved on the percentage of seats, 83.2—139 out of 167—but mustered a bare majority of votes—50.56 per cent; Mysore's tally was 165 of the 216 seats, 76.4 per cent, with 53.56 per cent of the votes. These were out of the eight States with more than half the votes polled.

The Congress (Organisation) drew a blank in Maharashtra and

managed to obtain a miserable 1.08 per cent of the votes. Its showing in the other two States was much better in terms of votes polled-23.70 per cent in Gujarat and 25.65 per cent in Mysore; but its percentage of seats was low-9.5 and 11.1 respectively. The old leaders of the Congress (O) had pinned their hopes on these two States because of the reasonably good record of their Governments and the untarnished image of both Hitendra Desai and Veerendra Patil. Is it possible for them to seek comfort in statistics? Hardly; it is the number of seats that ultimately matter. Before the election there was talk of converting the Congress (O) in these two States into regional or State parties and shed the association with the 'Syndicate'. Somehow, this did not come off but the immediate future holds out some possibility.

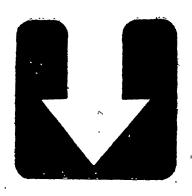
Cabinet-making on this occasion was not a game of general-post. It was more easily done because New Delhi appointed the Chief Ministers; the legislature parties merely gave their formal consent with the chief rival contestant proposing the name. It was known that V.P. Naik would continue as Chief Minister as he was reported to have pledged his personal loyalty to the Prime Minister; this was confirmed when his supporters were the largest group among But what is the candidates. not known is whether he will continue for the full term; the odds are that he will not. But his main rival, Shankarrao Chavan, also is said to have slim chances; none of the prize portfolios was offered to him and given the choice he selected agriculture rather than education. Vasantdada Patil, the President of the M.P.C.C., joined the cabinet and his is the name and progress as a minister to watch. Many old ministers have made way for new ones but socialists and young Turks have a lone representative in Sharad Powar. Once again, districts like Kohlapur and Sholapur have no representative in the cabinet; personal rivalries have kept them out.

The other two chief ministers are nominees of the Prime Minister.

Ghanshyam Oza, a Union Minister, was an obvious choice to still local rivalries. Respected by many and a non-controversial figure, his choice was well received. His cabinet is compact and small. All contenders for the leadership find place and have been assigned important portfolios; two socialists are also in. The expected happened in Mysore. Urs, the organisation chief and one of the first to rally round the Indira Gandhi banner, was tipped as the chief; and his nomination came as no surprise. He had studiously kept out of the electoral contest but Mrs. Gandhi's final approval was sought while she was at Dacca. His cabinet, too, has given good representation to several points of view, but it is a matter of doubt whether the principle of 'distributive justice' has been followed.

The Congress has returned to one-party dominance; but is there self-criticism in the party; if there is it is not evident. The Congress has been a past-master in the art of causing defections; it has paid dividends. With such overwhelming majorities it can no longer have alibis nor find scapegoats. Brave words are no substitute for good deeds. Mysore, which won laurels for ignoring caste, for giving a helping hand to the backward, has caused the first surprise and dent. In the election to the Rajya Sabha, Veerendra Patil was the Congress (O) candidate. With 24 of his M.L A.'s he secured 59 first preference votes. Is this the first straw in the wind?

The Congress everywhere, in the legislature and outside, covers a wide spectrum—in Bombay from Rajni Patel to Nana Chudasama, in Maharashtra from Vasantdada Patil to Mohan Dharia, in Gujarat, from Jaswant Mehta to Chimanbhai Patel. It once again answers to Dr. Ambedkar's scathing indictment that it is a dharmashala where any one—any one—can take shelter. It is still not a cohesive force forged by principles and policies. Hangerson and parasites are to the fore. Therein lies the danger for the future.



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READERS GIVE US

THEIR VIEWS

ON THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE

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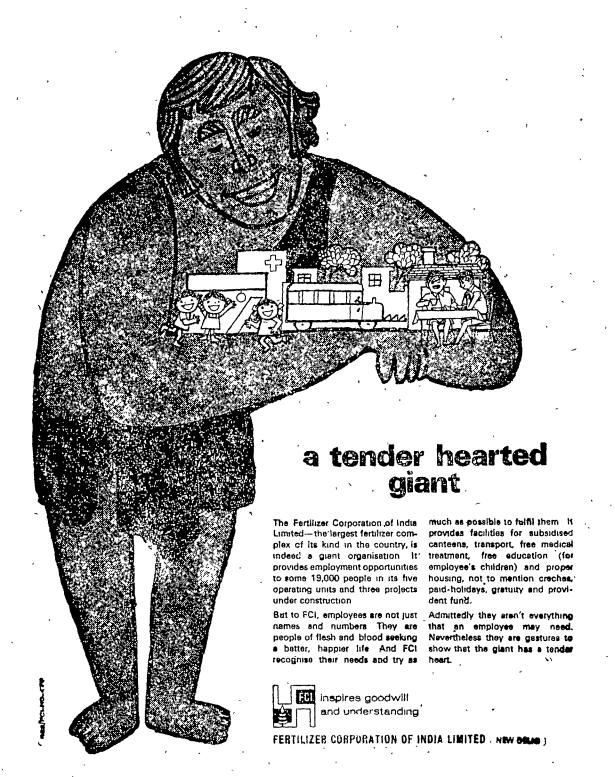
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Bengal

SANTI P. CHOWDHURY

ELECTION mathematics, at best, is a hazardous puzzle game. The figures are riddles because they are open to a multiplicity of interpretations. But, it is only the figures that can provide the clues to public opinion, to shifts in popular acclaim and disdain. The problem is to get close to the clue, to cut through the maze of subjective accusations and counter accusations. One advantage in West Bengal has been the convenient time frame—only a year between the 1971 and 1972 elections.

The process of political polarisation had led to increased support both for Congress (R) and the CPM in the 1971 elections in West Bengal. Congress (R) had 105 seats as against 55 obtained by the combined Congress in 1969. The CPM increased its seats from 80 to 113. In spite of the emergence of the CPM as the single biggest party. the rising curve of popular support for Indira Gandhi's party was clearly visible even in 1971. The Congress-youth-student group in West Bengal had also made its mark and some of its better-known leaders like Priya Das Munshi, Subrata Mukherjee, etc., had won important seats defeating well-established CPM and CPM supported personalities.

The impressive consolidation of Congress power since 1971 all over India and the charismatic dimension added to the Congress Party by Indira Gandhi's leadership, the projection of an anti-imperialist nationalist image and, above all, the astute handling of the Bangla Desh and the refugee issue turned the 1972 elections in West Bengal into a kind of referendum. Local issues

were forgotten and by passed and the elections became a kind of vote of confidence for Indira Gandhi's leadership.

Given this background, a Congress victory in the State was inevitable. This fact was privately conceded even by leading CPM activists before the elections. However, the Congress (R), including its leaders in the State like Debi Chattopaddhay, Siddartha Ray, etc., were very cautious in their forecasts for the size of their probable victory. 160/165 seats for Congress (R) seemed to be the best that could be hoped for. The CPI was more or less dismissed as a factor and many a Cassandra from the CPI ranks looked forward to political suicide with the kind of morbid delight which only the middle class supporters of the CPI are capable of.

It is well known that a section of the CPM has grown increasingly weary of parliamentary politics and therefore did not have their heart in the elections. Many of their leading cadres were in jail, many more were on the run and could not even enter their own areas. But, the dominant section had so totally hypnotised itself on the myth of the so-called Left political bias of the Bengal electorate, that, once the Left front was achieved, it was immediately interpreted as a dialectical leap towards the funnelling of an increased dimension of popular support. The thinking was that, at the very least, the CPM and its allied front would emerge as a major opposition to a possibly victorious Congress with a slender majority.

This was roughly the picture before the elections and nobody seemed very confident as to the results excepting Mrs. Gandhi, with her extraordinary sense of destiny. This then is the point of interest for the 1972 West Bengal elections—what were the factors, the variables, that transformed an expected modest swing towards Congress (R), into a victory of incredible proportions and a debacle for the Left forces, at least in terms of election politics.

Let us take the most obvious factor first. Ever since independence, there has been no occasion when an Indian could feel proud in the nationalistic sense of the term. He has been made to beg for his food from arrogant foreigners, he has remained one of the poorest, most backward human beings on the planet, he has had to face an ignominous defeat from his neighbour for unknown reasons, who he had traditionally considered his inferior, he has been constantly kicked around by his smaller neighbours and specially Pakistan.

For the Bengali, the traumatic partition of 1947 had never really been completed. A major section of the community had not only lost its homeland, but the exodus started in 1947 had never really stopped. Even in 1970, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs (almost entirely Hindu Bengalis) had to cross the border under pressure from communalists in East Bengal. When the major part of 10 million refugees took shelter in West Bengal in 1971, the bitter cup was really full to overflowing. Unemployment, lack of law and order, break down in almost all aspects of existenceand then, the sudden influx of millions. Even the inexhaustible resilience of Hindu fatalism looked like cracking down. Only a miracle could save the situation.

We middle class Indians have got so habit-bound in our stance of criticism, that praise does not come easily to us, even where such praise is richly deserved and concerns aspects of our national welfare. Without doubt, the handling of the refugee problem against tremendous odds, has been the most astute, the most successful piece of policy formulation and implementation during our long, arduous independence of 25 years. Even our familiar passive administration rose remarkably to the occasion. The liberation of Bangla Desh, Pakistan's ignominous defeat, our ability to stand up to big power pressure and, above all, the return of the millions of refugees—all this without serious dislocation of routine life in West Bengal.

During all this, the Left, the CPM. were at best silent spectators and at worst, would seem to have been cynical about the whole thing. This posture cannot but have affected a large section of their following. It is well known that an important percentage of CPM support is from the lower middle classes, specially in the greater Calcutta area—many of them are from East Bengal, many still live in the suburbs, in areas popularly known as the refugee colonies. To them, the lukewarm CPM attitude towards Bangla Desh must have come as a bitter disappointment. Mujib's phenomenal oratory skill, his declared admiration and respect for Indira Gandhi, his love of Tagore and secular statements, the intense attention in India and the world towards the Bengali-if these have not contributed towards an electoral swing, I don't know what can more powerfully swing the sentimental, sensitive Bengali. I think it is correct to say that the increased vote for Congress (R) in many constituencies (increase on their 1971 figures as well as the defection of a section of Left voters) is a Bangla Desh vote.

There is now a tendency to suggest that the entire West Bengal elections have been rigged. That this accusation is a part of the quixotic politics of the West Bengal Left is not difficult to substantiate. The minor Left parties of West Bengal (allies of the CPM) exist because of local support. The CPM, the major Left party, has always been equivocal about elections. This is evident from party policy and statements of CPM leaders over the years. On the one hand, it is declared that no Left State government will be allowed to function by the reactionary Centre, on the other hand, the major

activity of the CPM would seem to be to look forward to the elections.

This may well be the result of their leaders testing the forbidden fruit of ministerial power. It is now established beyond doubt that the rise in CPM power in West Bengal, at least partly, was through the use of government machinery, i.e., primarily, the police. During the United Front rule, the CPM deliberately unleashed this growth in all directions, even encroaching upon traditional strongholds of the other Left parties. This led to an isolation of the CPM for a period until just before the elections when the Front was forged.

Media alone could not have done so much harm to the CPM image, but vociferous attacks from the SUC, Forward Bloc and other Left parties stayed in peoples minds. The CPM became identified with terror tactics although all Left parties indulged in this internecine fratricide, not to mention the nascent youth wing of Congress (R) and its Chhatra Parishad. This nightmare world of terror-counter terror has been mainly restricted to the metropolis, the greater Calcutta area and its adjoining districts of 24-Parganas and Burdwan.

The bloodshed, in the main, has been restricted to the young and has taken on the character of a tribal feud. The police has played an opportunistic rôle, siding with the CPM or the Congress, depending upon who is in power. As to be expected, during the pre-election Governor's rule, there was no hesitation in siding with the Congress (R). There was hardly any ideological or revolutionary content to this struggle for supremacy in violence.

It started with the CPM tactics of setting upon the Naxalite youths—then, as the cycle changed, it was the Congress youth setting upon the CPM. The Congress youth gradually gained the upper hand because of police support and also because new, young recruits were no longer available to the CPM. Life in these localities had come to a standstill, people lived in an intolerable state of status-quo, no longer hoping for a better future but just wishing for an end to this violence at any cost. This really meant that there was a

desire to support the winning side. And the winning side, as it happened, was almost always represented by the youth.

Thus, despite obvious irregularities at Baranagar, there are other reasons which contributed to Jyoti Basu's defeat-surely, the most unexpected in West Bengal. Sibpada Bhattacharya, the CPI candidate who won, was said to have been recommended membership of the party by Jyoti Basu, as a student leader. They became opponents only after the split of the Communist Party. Similarly, at Tollygunj, the CPM leader and ex-mayor, Prasanta Sur, lost to Pankaj Banerjee, a voung engineer and Congress youth activist, whose father happened to be a friend of Prasanta Sur. It is impossible not to see a conflict of generations here.

Even in terms of terror, the pattern has always been the dominance of the rather uncommitted lumpen elements and they seem to give their loyalty more to young leaders, the activists. The veterans, the aging speech-spouting leaders, do not hold any appeal for this tough tribal lot. It is in areas where there has been a sort of civil-war situation, both sides killing and being killed, that there has been a spectacular swing towards Congress (R). It is a vote against the status-quo of violence, vote for the stronger side, a sad vote in the sense that political choice is reduced to a matter of actual survival.

The attraction towards the young is inevitable. A whole generation of leaders has so miserably let the people down. Therefore, rigging also becomes a kind of politically surcharged activity. It is not government machinery but the supremacy of the young toughs in an area that influenced peoples' decisions. But, in areas where the civilwar situation did not exist and counter-terror did not prevail, people seem to have freely exerted their political preferences.

Thus, Jadavpur, although an adjoining constituency to Tollygunj has supported the sitting CPM member with a majority of 10,000 votes. The areas in West Bengal

which bore the brunt of violence such as Baranagar, Tollyguni, Khardaha, Titagarh, Panihati, Kamarhati, Dum Dum, Kasipur, Shyampukur, Jorabagan, etc., were all areas where this terror-counter terror situation prevailed over a long period. It is also to be noted that apart from Tollyguni, these disturbed areas are contiguous. They start from the north of Calcutta, cut through Baranagar to the industrial belt. In all these areas, Congress (R) has won with a spectacular majority. It is an unavoidable conclusion that the CPM has suffered much from the politics of violence. The CPM's identification with terror in the public mind and the electorate's rejection of the CPM as the weaker terroristic combatant, in favour of the stronger side, identified Congress (R) as saviour. By not disavowing violence when it could afford to, the CPM has given an opportunity to Congress (R) to deploy their greater resources in young men and police support to influence votes.

That the CPM's popular support at the height of its reigning power was ephemeral, is evident from the fall of its citadel—the Burdwan district. Out of a total of 25 seats, the CPM had 23 and Congress only one in 1971. In 1972, the CPM retains only two and Congress wins 21 seats. The scandal of Nandanghat, Manteswar, Memari, Kalna, etc., are too well known to warrant recapitulation. The pattern is the same as in Baranagar, Dum Dum, if not worse. What is astonishing is the fact that this could happen in a district where the CPM-led Kisan Sabha was supposed to have had such strong bases.

It is true that many of the top CPM leaders of Burdwan were in jail, but there was no vigorous protest mass movement against terror at any time. It was only too clear to the CPM leadership that its supporters would have to face tremendous pressure, once they lost control over the home ministry. What did they do to anticipate the inevitable and to prepare the peasant masses for the expected troubles?

It is now clear that the answer is —absolutely nothing. While it encouraged arrogance and violence and

was determined to extend its influence overnight, this party with the reputation of possessing the finest, the most dedicated cadres. apparently did nothing to organise and consolidate its peasant support. The results in Birbhum and Bankura (both districts adjoining Burdwan) would indicate the same trend. There was an unreal expansion of CPM influence in these two districts in 1971 due to the party's strong position in Burdwan. In Birbhum, the CPM had 7 seats and Congress none, in Bankura, the CPM had 8 seats and Congress 3. The corresponding figures for 1972 are CPM none in Birbhum, Congress 8 seats, CPM none in Bankura and Congress 12 seats. It would seem obvious that the party's diminished image in Burdwan, or at any rate, its inability to maintain its hegemonistic influence in terms of fire power have made these districts vulnerable to the general swing towards Congress. The voting pattern would seem to rule out rigging, as there is no absurd difference in the margins like in the case of the notorious constituencies in Burdwan and the 24 Parganas, already cited.

In Burdwan and the 24 Parganas, districts where terror-counter terror played an important part, making nonsense both of CPM's political strategy and the Congress plea for fair elections, it is interesting to note that instead of the 48 seats that the CPM occupied in 1971, the seats have been reduced to 8, accounting for a total loss of 40 seats in these two districts alone.

The CPM has been wiped off the slate in the metropolis. During the Left upsurge of 1969, the CPM won 8 seats in Calcutta proper, this was already reduced to 5 in the 1971 elections and Congress had increased its seats from 5 in 1969 to 16 in 1971. So, the trend was already well established in 1971. The city population was exasperated beyond endurance by the continuing instability and, in any case, the Congress (R) youth group had made itself felt, the city was also more open to the Bangla Desh issue, to Indira Gandhi's charisma. Therefore, the 1972 figures of Congress 20 and CPM zero should surprise no one. The main stronghold of the CPM in the city was its lower middle

class clerical population, not the bravest class at the best of times. When the Governor summarily scuttled the Writers' Building Coordination Committee movement, and no substantial protest followed, it was clear to all observers that the residual influence of the CPM had disappeared from the city.

Thus, the CPM has lost 40 (Burdwan, 24 Parganas) and 5 (Calcutta) where terror-counter terror may be said to have been the main reality. There may be half a dozen other constituencies spread all over the State where the voting margins may leave some ground for speculation about fair elections. This total of about 50 deducted from 216 seats won by Congress, i.e., 166, would seem to agree with our earlier formulation of what worked like the projection before the elections. The word 'rigging' is vastly misleading; the game of terror would be the right description of what prevailed.

The other districts are easier to understand. In traditional strongholds, Congress has increased its over-all position because of the general swing, such as Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, West Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Maldaha, Murshidabad, Midnapore, Purulia. In districts like Hooghly and Howrah, in spite of spectacular Congress success in getting seats, the voting pattern only suggests a general swing—the margins in many constituencies are very narrow, such as in Uttarpara where the sitting CPM member has won by only 8 votes.

Similarly, the rebel Forward Bloc has won the Uluberia seat by 282 votes from the sitting CPM member. The fact that in Nuddea, Congress has increased its seats from 1 in 1971 to 12 in 1972 and the CPM from 9 in 1971 is now reduced to nil, is to be entirely ascribed to the Bangla Desh issue. The swing varies between 10 to 30 per cent in favour of Congress indicating both the defection of CPM voters and increased support from the floating vote in favour of Congress, in a district bordering East Bengal with much refugee concentration.

There are some other interesting revelations in the 1972 elections.

While communalism, specially of the Muslim League variety, and right reaction have been dealt a severe blow, local aspirations based on language or cultural identity have not fared so badly. There seems to be stronger continuing loyalty in this direction as proved by the Gurkha League victory over the CPM in Jorbanglow. In at least ten constituencies-Jorbanglow. Kharba, Farakka, Domkal, Hingalganj, Kultali, Jaynagar, Deganga, Haroa, Rajarhat, etc., the elections have been fought on local issues where the general swing has not made much difference. Since the Congress (R) has done quite well in these seats, in general, it may be concluded that the minorities including the Muslims of Bengal have lent their support to the Congress (R) where local politics have dictated such support.

In 1971, the CPI received 8.13 per cent of the vote obtaining 9 seats, in 1972 in spite of its overall percentage of votes getting reduced to 7.72 per cent, the CPI has emerged as the second biggest party with 35 seats. This is not exactly the political suicide which was visualised before the elections. There is no doubt that the CPI has gained from its alliance with the Congress and it is possible to argue that if the Congress had put up its own candidates they would have captured these seats anyway. The CPI may be on its way out as a Left party in West Bengal, but its strategy in terms of election politics seems to have paid handsome dividends. This indicates that the CPI stand seems more consistent to the electorate even if it seems less revolutionary. It certainly establishes that there is no prejudice against the CPI.

The political future of the State however is not as clear cut as the election figures suggest. The Bangla Desh question is already a thing of the past and, if anything, it might well prove to be a Trojan horse in the future. Dramatic swings also are less reliable indicators of the public mind. Bengali ebullience is notoriously capable of flopping at

the first signs of failed expectations. The main strength of Congress (R) is its youth-student wing—it is calling all the cards now. There is well-known dissension within the State Congress and there is no suitable personality powerful enough to command continuing loyalty. The State leaders are riding a tiger—the blood-thirsty young may soon start fighting amongst themselves, now that the CPM youth, at least temporarily, has been emasculated.

Judging by the present activity of the CPM, there is no reason to hope for a more coherent policy from that party. The present leadership is too exhausted, too old, too habit bound, to initiate new directions in political struggle which will require a lot of imagination, stamina and a return to basic revolutionary principles. If the present trends continue, the CPM will gradually disappear into limbo. On the other hand, only under its leadership is it possible for the new Left Front to move into mass struggles of a principled political character which will again attract the young to renew a Left which is rapidly becoming moribund.

Ultimately, it is a question of how the young can be inspired and guided in the State. At the moment, the ruling party has the young with them—if they can lead them into pro-people action (after all, half the Congress MLAs are new and young), seriously tackle the many injustices in the State, start solving at least one problem instead of waiting for a total solution and doing nothing—then people in the State will be prepared to wait and hope.

If this does not happen, dazzling speeches and indefinite promises will not hold the youth. If the Left can give a new lead, the youth will again swing towards them because the fundamental socio-economic problems of our society demand a sea-change in political concepts.

Will it come from an evolving, changing, more socialistic Congress or will a new rejuvenated Left provide the new directions? Or to pose the possibilities differently—will both fail and West Bengal go down the hill to greater anarchy and disaster?

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Communication

I was shocked and deeply pained to read Mr Singh's article, 'Ananda Marga' in your March issue. I could scarce believe that a magazine like yours could publish scandalous material gleaned from the yellow press by someone who claims to be a correspondent of several magazines. I regret to say that you have betrayed grave irresponsibility in publishing a tendentious and cock-eyed article. Were you unaware of the fact that the controversies dilated upon in the article The author is starkly are sub judice? ignorant about Ananda Marg-he does not even know that Anandamurtiji is not a sanyasi and never was. He libellously says that the 'Ananda Marga Chief has violated all the rules of sanyas by marrying and producing a score of children'. Would you care to determine the credentials of the author who dubs the Marg as secret, communal and even feudal?

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The article brims with mendacity. Ananda Marga has not been liquidated by the desertion of a score or two of its followers. At a time when the Marga faces persecution not only by vested interests but by the government also, it is not surprising if the persons with scant moral courage disown it. Ananda Marga maintains its educational institutions and orphanages through the contributions of lakhs of spiritual aspirants who donate 2 per cent of of their income. If the author had visited Ananda Marga schools and had seen the good that they are doing, he would not have called them 'brain-washing' centres. Mr Singh does not see the humanitarian work it is doing with a deep sense of service and sacrifice; on the other hand, he infers that it is exploiting human misery.

Like all reform movements, Ananda Marga—still in its embryonic stages—faces opposition from those who have a vested interest in the *status* quo.

A. S. Pilgrim,

Young Men's Spiritual Association, New Delhi.

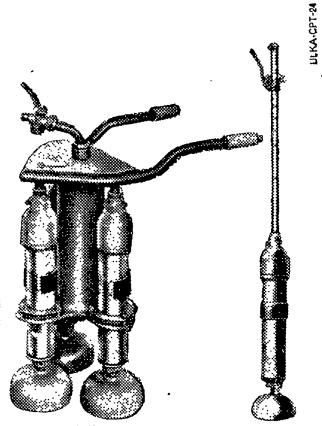
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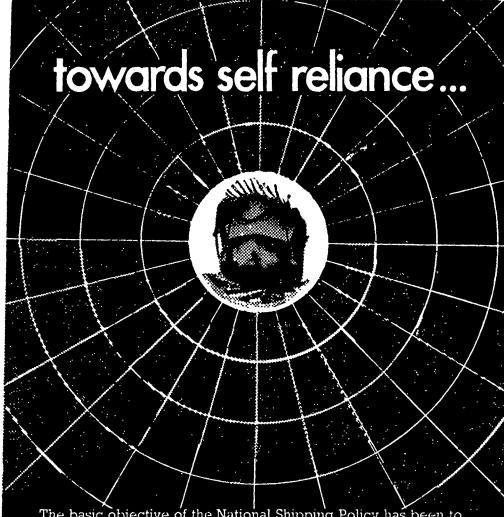
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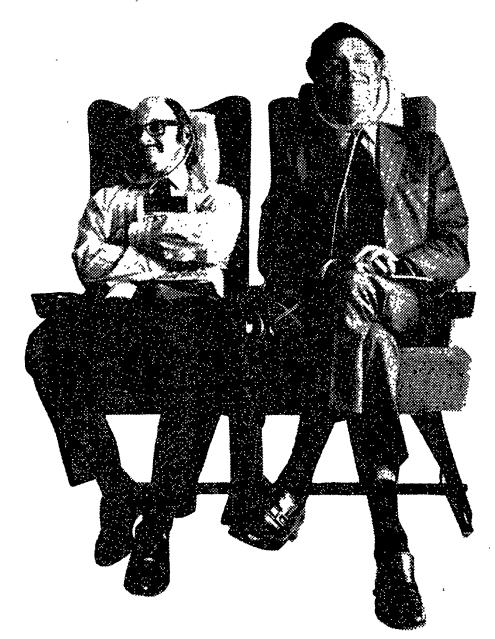


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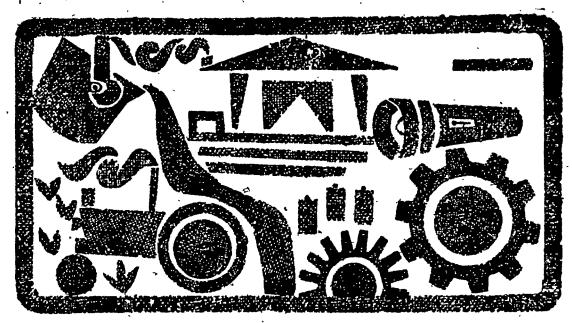
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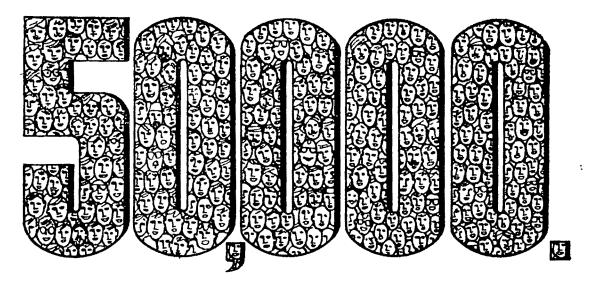
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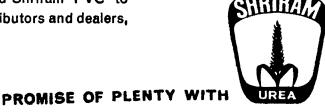


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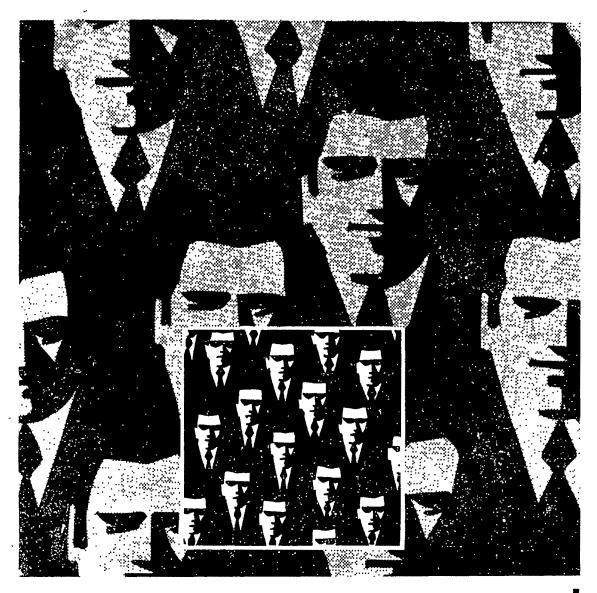
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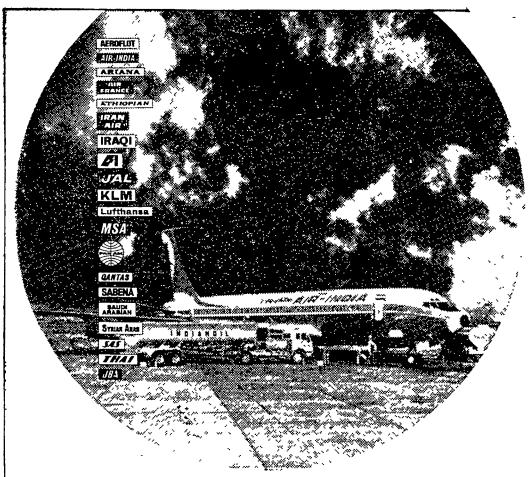


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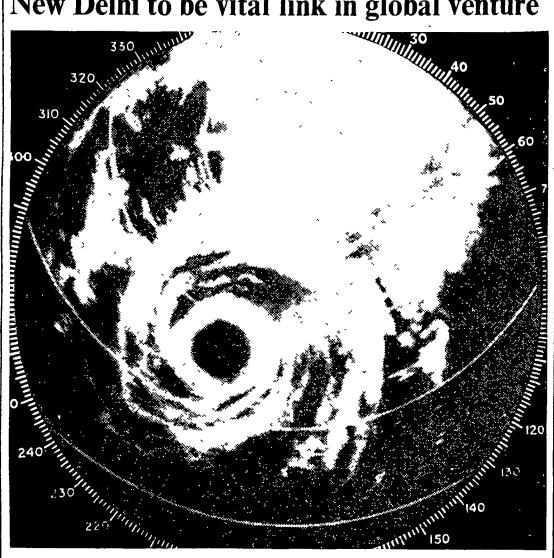
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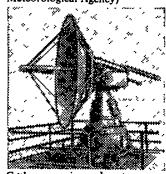
3

MEETING THE CHALLENGE O THE STORMY SPECTRE

New Delhi to be vital link in global venture



Radar photograph of cyclone showing clearly the eye and the spiral rain bands. (Photograph courtesy Japan Meteorological Agency)



Cyclone warning radar at Visakhapatnam. (Photograph courtesy India Meteorological Department)

misery. Today's weathermen are meeting the challenge of the stormy spectre through the use of modern tools like the computer. Now they can know in real time the changing weather conditions and predict more accurately when and where a cyclone will strike often early enough for the threatened inhabit-

Cyclones need not cause | ants to move out before the cyclone moves in.

> Computers are also being used to warn people of floods and to forecast rain and drought.

A timely and accurate forecast for any area requires thousands of calculations at different places. Every 24 hours more than 8,000 meteorological land stations in 130 countries take a total of some 110,000 readings of temperature, pressure, visibility and humidity.

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These facts are then colleccollated and converted m weather forecasts—for wo wide distribution.

International, regional national observation stati around the world have be linked to form the We Weather Watch (WWW).

India forms an important N in the WWW. The Regic Telecommunication Hub New Delhi handles abou million five-digit figure: day; the Meteorolog Communication Centre Bombay handles sev. hundred thousand.

India has one of the ola meteorological systems in world. It was also one of first to use the computer meteorology. The Institute Tropical Meteorology Poona had one installed 1963 to develop the la> techniques for weather s

A System/360 Model 44, latest in computers, will so be installed at the Regio-Meteorological Centre at N Delhi, which has been est lished as part of the WWW Working in nanosecom (a nanosecond) is to a seco what a second is to 30 yea the new computer will h analyse data and prep detailed weather forecast maps of India and nei bouring areas every few hos New Delhi will also serve the forecasting centre of International Civil Aviation Organisation, providing we ther services for aircraft. These measures will ensu speedier, more accurate we

ther forecasts over long

periods-for pilots, marine coastguards, flood cont engineers, irrigation officia

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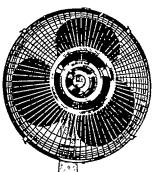
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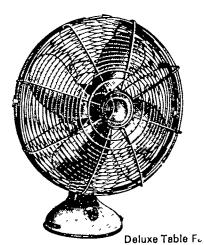


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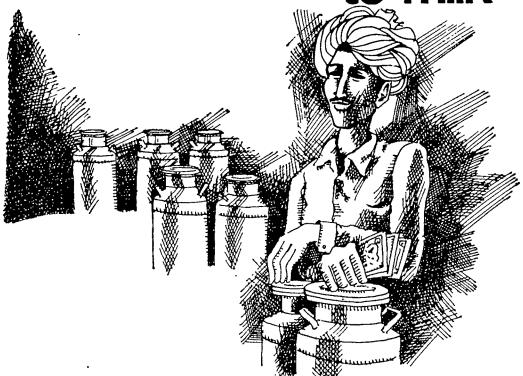
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FANS

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Milk co-operatives as an instrument for creating new jobs

Survey of two villages in Kaira traces half their income to milk



Rearing milk cattle has become as important an occupation as agriculture in many villages in Kaira. In villages with milk co-ops, slightly over half the income is from milk, as against 20% in villages without milk co-ops. Apart from raising village incomes, milk co-ops have created more jobs in villages, in collection centres, in cattle feed plants and in animal husbandry services.

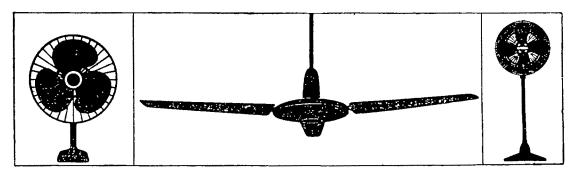
With mechanisation of farming displacing people from agriculture, it is imperative that villages should offer alternative opportunities for employment. The traditional farmer is under-employed in any case. Dairying offers a part solution to both problems.

This survey was conducted by the Department of Economics, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar. The computed income included remittances from relatives in Africa.

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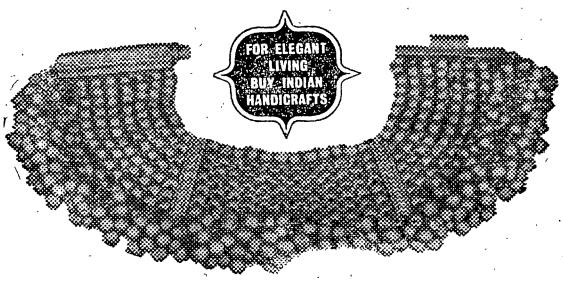


BETTER BUY USHA YOU CAN'T BUY BETTER



indeed these are SITA'S said LAKSHMANA

He had no difficulty in identifying
Sita's anklets. Such was their individuality.
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in artistic varieties and styles.
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combining beauty with utility.





THE MONTHLY SYMPOSIUM POST BOX 338 NEW DELF

a journal which seeks to reflect through free discussion, every shade of Indian thought and aspiration. Each month, a single problem is debated by writers belonging to different persuasions. Opinions expressed have ranged from congress to socialist, from sarvodaya to communist to swatantra. The

non-political specialist, too, has voiced his views. In this we have been possible to answer a real need of today, to go the facts and ideas of this age and to help thinking parrive at a certain degree of cohesion and clarity facing the problems of economics, of politics, of cur

publisher/ROMESH THAPAR

managing editor/RAJ THAPAR

production/TEJBIR SINGH

circulation/C. B. KU

Published from Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi-1. Telephone: 46534. Cable Address: Seminar, New Delhi. Single copy: 5 N. pence; 70 cents (\$). Yearly Rs. 20; £2.15; \$6, Three Yearly: Rs. 50; £7.10; \$16. Reproduction of material prohibited unless per

NEXT MONTH: INDIA IN ASI



PERMITS AND LICENSES



a symposium on the procedures which confront the industrial sector

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

A statement which summarises the many facets of the prevailing situation

MAKE IT EFFICIENT

K. K. Subrahmanian, Deputy Director, Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research, Ahmedabad

CONTROL AND REGULATION

I. Z. Bhatty, Director, National Council of Applied Economic Research, Delhi

SCOPE OF POLICY

M. V. Namjoshi,

Director, Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management, Poona

TENDER SYSTEM

F A. Mehta, Director Tata Industries

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Deepak Lal, Lecturer in Political Economy, University College, London

BOOKS

Reviewed by H. K. Paranjape, Satya Narain and Anuradha Luther

FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography compiled by D. C. Sharma

COMMUNICATION

Received from N. K. Singh (Patna)

COVER

Designed by Trilokesh Mukerji

The problem

INDIA inherited a system of economic controls from the British Raj. Although the British Government of India was wedded to laissez-faire for over a century, it was compelled to adopt a system of economic regulations and controls in the period of the second world war. Because of shipping shortages, and the main sources of imports having dried up, import controls became necessary. The stoppage of rice imports from Burma and the gradual increase of inflation led to a system of food controls, considerably wellorganised and elaborate in a few areas like Bombay, much worse organised in many other parts of the country. The Bengal famine of 1943-44 emphasised the importance of regulated supplies of food-grains. As a part of antiinflationary measures, controls on some other essential commodities such as textiles and iron and steel also came to be imposed.

As usually happens with the imposition of a system of controls and regulations, the more unscrupulous elements in the business commu-

nity simultaneously developed systems of evading these controls and regulations. In the situation in which India was placed at that time, such evasion could be considered by the business community as not only profitable but alsopatriotic. Even leaders of the nationalist movement thought that the controls were unnecessary and an imposition of the foreign rulers and, in spite of the advice of the more far-seeing among economists and economic administrators, soon after Independence, government decided to experiment with foodgrains decontrol. effects were so disastrous that controls on foodgrains were re-imposed within a short time. But, this instance of contradictory policies marks the beginning of the ambivalence that the post-Independence government developed regarding the approach to economic policy, the system of economic controls and regulations being only one special aspect of it.

Although the country adopted the policy of planned economic development while maintain-

10.

ing a mixed economy, there was little clarity about the manner in which the economy should operate. Soon after Independence we had a very radical orientation of economic policy suggested by the AICC Economic Programmes Committee (1948) presided over by the Prime Minister himself. This, however, led to such a furore in the business community, and among their numerous friends in the ruling party, that the Industrial Policy Resolution which was issued soon thereafter provided a much watered down approach to the roles of the public and private sectors.

The Industries Development and Regulation Act was passed in 1951 to provide the basis for planned industrial development. The first five-year plan, though in concrete terms it did little by way of undertaking major development schemes and programmes, spelt out an approach to economic development and the policy requirements thereof which could be considered largely unexceptional in the Indian context. But, while

the plan document spoke about the importance of food controls as a long term instrument of economic administration for development in the Indian context, decontrol of foodgrains became almost the most important achievement claimed by government at the end of the first five-year plan.

This ding-dong of contradictions in announcements and actions, and the confusion and mix-up in thinking, has continued through these years since Independence. The role that detailed controls and regulations should play as against the use to be made of the price mechanism and the market forces for the pursuit of the social and economic objectives of government has never been clearly worked out by any policy formulating agency including the Planning Commission. We, therefore, continue to have an enormous number of regulations and controls whose operation serves no clear purpose and whose existence many times goes against economic rationality as well

as the basic values of democracy, growth and equality which we cherish.

Take the example of house rent and accommodation control that prevails in most big cities since the years of the war. The rents as well as the tenancies in places like Bombay have been frozen practically since 1940. The anomaly of having house rents frozen at the 1940 levels or with a 10 or 15 per cent increase when the price level has multiplied manyfold is obvious. It has placed a heavy burden on one particular section of property holders who may not deserve any special sympathy but whose natural response has been not to maintain the properties which have been steadily going out of repair. The notorious pugree system in Bombay is also the natural result of this control.

The control also favours the older generation against the newer one, the older inhabitants against the recent migrants and one category of tenants—the pre-1950 ones—as against others. Does this make economic or social sense? No one has attempted an answer and the system continues from year to year without in any way helping to reduce the housing shortages or to bring about any kind of national solution to the problem.

The system of industrial licensing has already been thoroughly examined by a number of authorities—the Swaminathan Committee, Professor R. K. Hazari and the Dutt Committee, among others. It has been clearly pointed out that whatever the intentions may have been, the establishment of a system under which every industrial unit requiring an investment of about Rs. 7.5 lakhs needed an industrial licence for being set up, for expansion or for producing a new article, has hardly served the basic objectives of industrial planning.

Priorities of industrial development as indicated in plan documents have hardly been observed in the actual growth of industries except where the government directly undertook priority investments through the creation of public sector enterprises. Where priority industries have actually developed in the private sector, this has not been due so much to industrial licensing as to other factors such as the creation of particular demands, the availability of finance from financial institutions, etc.

At the same time, the creation of excess capacity or capacity for low priority industries has not been prevented. Regional dispersal is an objective which was little furthered—so also the growth of small scale industries. Cooperative ownership or the development of new entrepreneurs was not specially supported through industrial licensing which appears to have actually helped the more rapid growth of some of the largest industrial houses. At the same time, a number of uneconomic units were created and

the growth of healthy competitive units was prevented through the exercise of licensing powers.

With little understanding of what industrial capacity had to be created in the very large number of new industries whose development followed the growth in complexity of our industrial structure, with even confusion abounding about the concept of 'capacity' itself, there were many anomalies in the licensing system which was administered by a proliferating bureaucracy which little understood industry, technology or economics.

The powers of licensing, however, became a good basis for granting favours, increasing the powers of bureaucrats at all levels in the concerned ministries and organisations, and of the politicians who were in a position to influence final decisions. Maintaining a liaison office in Delhi, being able to keep in touch with the right people in the Secretariat or in the ruling party, being able to trace the movement of files and influence their speed at different stages—these became far more important for successful industrial entrepreneurship than a flair for understanding new types of industrial development, getting hold of proper techniques and technologists and having a capacity for bringing these together and setting up a new productive unit with as much indigenous initiative and control as practicable.

After the most severe indictment of the system of industrial licensing as it has worked, the Dutt Committee recommended certain clear cut changes in the system. It suggested that there should be a no-licensing-area in which only the smaller industrial units should operate; an area of core industries for which it was essential that there should be detailed planning on a long term basis and where the larger industrial houses should be permitted to take the initiative for development either by themselves or in collaboration with the public sector; and a very large middle are a where licensing was to be free except for the purpose of keeping out the top industrial houses whose further growth was to be concentrated only for the more difficult industries. Where the development of certain luxury or similar industries was considered unnecessary, there were to be definite bans for periods of 4 or 5 years.

The approach was to eliminate pure discretion in the exercise of industrial licensing powers. The government announcement of the new licensing policy, however, fudged the issues sufficiently so that there should be enough scope for the exercise of discretion by the bureaucrat and the politician. Even the more influential businessmen, who are not too particular about the means they employ, prefer this—because they are confident that they can win friends and influence the right people to use the discretion in their favour.

A new complementary instrument which has been brought into existence is the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act. The ne essity to prevent undue concentration of economic power and the exploitation of monopoly power where it exists had been stressed by many advocates of policy reform. When the government therefore decided to put a comprehensive legislation on the Statute Book following the report of the Monopolies Inquiry Commission, the step was welcomed even by the enlightened sections of private industry.

Although the Act has been in operation just for over a year, many misgivings have developed even in the minds of those who support the principles underlying such a legislation. The Act itself has been so poorly drafted that in many cases the question of which are 'dominant' undertakings or 'monopolistic' undertakings remains unclear. The definition of 'interconnection' was based on the existence of the managing agency system—and somehow when the managing agency system was abolished, though it was done by the same department as administers the Monopolies Act, the implication of this abolition on the working of the Act was overlooked.

As usually happens, little attention was given when drafting the Bill, or subsequently, to the organisational and personnel requirements of effectively using the powers provided under the Act. Suggestions that only the most troublesome monopolistic cases or the very large concentrations of business groups should attract the provisions of the Act were not accepted—and at the same time discretion was left to the government to decide which cases of further development of larger business units should be referred to the Monopolies Commission for an enquiry. Such an addition to the area of discretionary powers of government was bound to lead to misunderstanding if not misuse. This is already happening.

Coupled with the general inefficiency of government, and the lack of drive and speedy decision making, obtaining permissions under the Monopolies Act appears to have added one more hurdle to the already very arduous hurdles-race that an entrepreneur has to run before he can develop an industry. Many people wonder whether the creation of so many hurdles in the way of industrial development is a method for ushering in socialism or for maintaining industrial stagnation.

Control over imports and foreign exchange has been in existence right since the days of the second world war. Import licensing became stricter specially as the tempo of development increased from the second five-year plan onwards, and after the country faced a serious foreign exchange crisis. Since then an elaborate system of import control including the imports of capital goods has been in existence. With the foreign aid obtained from many sources in various forms

and on various bases, many anomalies have come about and they have almost become a permanent feature of an unrecognisably complex system.

One result of the foreign exchange shortage has been that, during certain periods, whether a new project proposal could go through essentially depended upon whether an entrepreneur could secure a foreign collaborator able to arrange (through equity participation or additional credits) the payment for the import of machinery, etc. The long-term implications of such an approach were many times ignored. The pitiful attempt at scrutinising thousands of import requirements in detail by a controlling organisation has inevitably given rise to injustice, inefficiency, and corruption.

Obtaining an import licence has itself become a gate-pass for making a substantial profit, and thus a system of bureaucratic and political corruption has been built around it. Under-invoicing and over-invoicing have become common and no one knows how much capital the country has exported through the bank balances built up abroad in numbered accounts in Switzerland. With the insulation of the Indian market, there is no incentive for quality improvement or even for maintaining regular supplies—at the same time, with the very large profit margins available, smuggling has become big business, reputedly having its supporters among various echelons of the bureaucracy, the ruling party and legitimate trade.

The system of trade agreements, specially on rupee payment terms, has led to the diversion of exports to third countries and the obtaining of imports through them at considerable additional expenditure. Tied aid from the United States and other countries, similarly, has led to undue capitalisation, making for high costs of production and difficulties for exports.

Imports of even small value for the development or regular operation of industries, for obtaining some essential missing links, spare parts or minor quantities of essential raw material involve considerable waste of time, influence and money at Delhi. While foreign exchange is denied for essential imports or legitimate travel on the part of less influential businessmen or technologists, no difficulty is experienced by business magnates going with their families around the world. It is known that India was one of the countries that sent the largest number of visitors to the Tokyo Expo.

The height of absurdity is reached when government itself permits people to go abroad once every three years, on a meager allowance of foreign exchange which cannot cover even a few days' of living expenses—and even permits any incoming traveller to import an expensive television set or similar item without any ques-

tions being asked about how he has paid for it. No wonder that the black-market price of foreign exchange is Rs. 12.50 or Rs. 13.00 per dollar.

Suggestions made from time to time to bring about rationalisation of this whole system fall on deaf ears. So-called leftists think that every control is good for socialism and therefore oppose its modification or abolition. The dishonest bureaucrats and politicians know that without the maintenance of this elaborate system of discretionary controls, their power and therefore a major source of the money which they can collect would vanish. Even the honest ones are so nervous about the possible difficulties which may arise with the abolition of this elaborate system of long standing that they would rather postpone the issue indefinitely. Their feeling is no different from someone who has been in a prison cell so long that he is afraid of coming out. So we go on merrily maintaining a system of permit license raj.

Those who understand the harm that this system is causing to development, efficient operation of the economic system, and also to political and administrative morality, have on many occasions suggested basic modifications in it. Without going as far as the Swatantra Sancho Panzas, advocating a laissez faire system which is obviously impracticable in a situation like India's, there have been advocates of a more rational approach. The Raj Committee on steel control, for example, had pointed out how the maintenance of uneconomic steel prices benefitted neither the steel industry nor the national economy and had suggested a complete overhaul of the system with much play to the market forces.

The discussion which revolved around the foreign exchange problem in 1965-66 and which ultimately led to the devaluation of the rupee at that time was also essentially aimed at eliminating the irrational system of import and foreign exchange controls which has been built up. Unfortunately, the manner in which the measures came to be implemented led to no remedy and tarnished any such advocacy. The fate of the Report of the Dutt Committee has already been mentioned.

Thus, attempts at removing the irrational cobwebs fouling economic rationality have failed up to now. There are even 'socialist' advocates of a further increase in the area of discretion. It is being suggested, for example, that borrowers supposedly belonging to particular categories—low income groups or particular occupations like agriculture—should be given credit advances by nationalised banks at specially low rates. Already the attempt to reach unrealistic targets of supplying agricultural credit without proper preparation is leading to enormous amounts of bad debts which might put the nationalised banking industry out of gear.

It would not be surprising if there is a demand that nationalised general insurance should also provide subsidised insurance to so-called less developed occupations or business. Demands for providing subsidised services or goods to particular sections continue to be made in the name of socialism. In all such demands, it is forgotten that once the economic calculus is ignored, no norms remain for efficient operation, and only the sky is the limit for subsidization and waste.

The important questions which have to be examined are: are the alternatives limited to an elaborate system of detailed regulations and controls and so-called free competition? Can we not think of a system where administrative controls and regulations are confined to a comparatively small critical area where discretion can be exercised with a great deal of detailed knowledge and understanding of the issues involved?

At the same time, can't the price mechanism be used far more effectively for the efficient operation and functioning of the economic system? Is it not possible to develop methods by which concealed subsidies are eliminated so that accounting becomes clearer and the choices made can be based on a more rational understanding? Is it also not possible to adopt systems of decision making which do not involve the maintenance of an enormous bureaucracy and a system of blockages at numerous points which hinder the path of anyone who wants to do anything or achieve anything?

Is it also not possible to adopt methods by which black money which today is coming to be important in quite a significant area of our economy can be eliminated, thus reducing the demoralisation and the murky atmosphere of corruption which is enveloping our society? If monopolies are to be controlled, both regarding their further growth and their operation, how can this be done without discouraging dynamic development? Is the anti-monopoly set-up that has been organised suitable and adequate for these objectives?

In answering these questions, one general consideration has also to be kept in view. The democratic process involves elections. Direct elections with a large mass of electorate as in India cost a great deal of money. How are funds for meeting these expenses to be raised? In the past, the answer has always been—mostly from the business community; and the business community in turn has made funds available mainly in return for favours rendered through use of discretion in their favour. Even the ban on company donations, instead of curtailing the contribution from businesses, has worsened the situation by making business contributions in black money, under-the-counter payments. Can a democratic system based on elections do without such a source of fund-raising in the hands of politicians?

Make it efficient

K. K. SUBRAHMANIAN

THE policy of planned economic development within the framework of a mixed economy as it has been practised in India during the last two decades has produced a labyrinth of controls and regulations in many spheres of economic life. The control system, particularly in the industrial sector, has received considerable attention in academic and public discussions. The advocates of a free enterprise philosophy have always considered the control system as antithetical to economic rationality as well as to the basic

values of democracy, growth and equality. The findings of expert committee after committee which have looked into the working of the industrial control system have testified to the shortcomings of the working of the system in India.

In the light of the poor performance record of the controls system, it is increasingly being felt that the enormous number of controls and regulations enveloping the economic life so far have served no purpose and, therefore, some alternative

mechanism will have to be relied upon to achieve our economic goals. The policy alternative implicit in this or explicitly stated in some quarters, is that the control system should be removed and the functioning of the economic system should be put more and more into the invisible hands of the market game.

It is not necessary to enter into a polemical discussion on planning versus laissez faire. A number of problems, nevertheless, pose them-If the instrument of selves. industrial licensing for example is abrogated, will the alternative device of a 'market mechanism' serve the desired objectives? Perhaps the extremists would like to restore their faith in the magio wand of laissez faire! The moderates would advocate a more 'rational' approach of indirect control with increased reliance on the price mechanism. Then, will a general fiscal or commercial policy rather than direct controls be an effective policy tool for the efficient operation of the Indian economic system?

All these issues have no pat answers. The simplest and most logical way is to ask: are the short-comings observed in the past inherent in the control system? Or are those the result of the improper way in which the control system was organised and operated? Could not the shortcomings be rectified so that one need not throw away the baby along with the bath water? The issue assumes significance particularly in respect of industrial licensing.

Planning in a democratic society is not only an economic philosophy but also an economic technique. It is a programme for the ordered use of resources to attain defined objectives in a given time horizon, executed through the administrative machinery. The adoption of planning as an economic technique implies acceptance of some element of control. In India, the industrial planning system consists of (a) demarcation of activity spheres between public and private sectors under the Industrial Policy Resolution, (b) laying down of priorities

and targets by the Planning Commission, and (c) ensuring their fulfilment by the administrative machinery operating under the legal framework of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act of 1951. The industrial planning system, therefore, calls for certain sanctions from the administrative machinery for setting up and operating production capacities. important sanctions in India include an industrial licence, a capital issues consent, approval of the terms for foreign collaboration and permits for the import of capital goods and maintenance goods.

In addition, a host of other sanctions are required both from local and central administrations for obtaining land, power, controlled materials, etc. There is also price control aimed at providing equitable distribution of scarce supplies at regulated prices. A complex system of controls exercised by different administrative agencies, but basically for the same purpose, has to be cut through separately and successively by the industrialists for setting up and operating in industrial production.

In this complex control system, however, the only basic control measure introduced after independence is the IDR Act, which laid down the system of industrial licensing for setting up or expanding manufacturing capacity in the Schedule Industries. Most other control measures were inherited from the second world war period and maintained to function as adjuncts to the industrial licence in a shortage economy. The main objective of industrial licensing is to direct industrial investment in accordance with Plan targets and priorities. The system is also intended to be instrumental in the fulfilment of social objectives like the prevention of undue concentration of economic power and monopoly practices, regional dispersal and protection of small scale and medium industries, enunciated in the Industrial Policy Resolution. The system of controls in the industrial sector thus, in a sense, is a corrective to the imperfections of the invisible hands of the market mechanism and aims at performing

the allocative function so as to ensure a smooth and consistent pattern of industrial growth.

The system of controls, whether in industrial licensing or quantitative restriction or price control, essentially would bestow some measure of discretion upon the administrative machinery. In India, however, pure discretion rather than economic rationale has dominated the decision-making of the economic administrators for various reasons. The confusion and mix-up of thinking on the role of the price mechanism in a mixed economy led to the adoption of an ambivalent attitude by the policy makers, and economic policies were often worked out without a clear perception of the objectives or without setting out definite criteria for guiding the implementation. In the absence of well defined ground rules, the administrative machinery, which was found generally incompetent and inefficient to meet the requirements of a growing economy, and susceptible to external pulks and pressures, enjoyed greater freedom in exercising discretion and based its decisions on pure discretion rather than economic rationale.

Ad hoc and short-run considerations therefore guided the application of controls and regulations in individual cases. As a result, the long term objectives of planning itself tended to get side-tracked. Besides, the unscrupulous elements in the society always had the wit to develop methods for evading the controls. When the system of controls howsoever good its intention, was improperly organised and operated, it failed to fulfil its objectives and its actual achievements fell short of the desired goals.

The failures and the anomalies in the industrial licensing system have been well brought out in the reports of official committees and other studies and hence need not be gone into in detail. One consequence of the complex system of control and multiplicity of procedural requirements was administrative delay. While administrative sanctions were concerned mainly with one subject functionwise, the matter fell within the jurisdiction of many, and sanc-

tions had to be obtained separately and successively. The longer the ladder of formalities, the larger was the scope for maladministration and malpractices. Red-tape, a slow decision making apparatus, an excessive bureaucracy and inordinate delays not only acted as a disincentive to entrepreneurial initiative and morality, but resulted in the waste of resources in terms of time lost, production foregone, import continuance and the like, all of which contributed to slowing down the pace of industrial growth.

Another consequence of industrial licensing was that its performance record was poor in directing investment in accordance with the Plan. It failed to limit the growth of capacity in some sectors (particularly in low priority areas) consistent with the Plan target. It could not be instrumental in the fufilment of capacities in other areas (particularly in the more essential ones), excepting the public sector. various reasons, industrial licences were issued in products for the creation of capacities in excess of the Plan targets. Similarly, foreign capital and technology were allowed to be imported indiscriminately. The situation of over-licensing and indiscriminate collaboration gave the planned economy the semblance of a market economy with the attendant demand uncertainties, excess capacities and instability. Paradoxically, the control system thus took away one of the crucial advantages of planning!

In fulfilling its positive role, industrial licensing had obvious limitations, for the licensing authorities could not directly force the private sector to invest in the desired channels. Industrial licensing could have, however, with other complementary economic measures for removing the obstacles, induced the private sector to divert investment into the desired channels. This, however, would have called for reconciliation between industrial profitabilities and industrial priorities which was lacking in the Indian situation.

Curiously enough, the control system was organised in such a

way as to create rather than to remove obstacles. Price control in some selected products is a clear example. In a partially controlled economy, profit maximising entrepreneurs normally chose areas free from price control for investment purposes on profitability considerations irrespective of their priorities in the Plan. The existence of price control in some products (cement, steel, etc.) thus failed to divert investment into these sectors and, thus, planned capacities remained underfulfilled in some products of strategic importance. The observed imbalance in the capacity creation and non-adherence to Plan priorities and targets by the industrial licensing system suggested its failure in fulfilling even its basic objective of planned development.

One also clearly reads from the various studies and official reports that the licensing system, as it operated in India, did not help achieve the social objectives of the Industrial Policy Resolution. For example, almost all expert studies like the Hazari Report, the MIC Report, the Dutt Committee Report testified that the licensing system in India worked in such a way as to produce disproportionately larger benefits to a few large industrial houses and thus tended to accentuate the concentration and monopoly problems.

All these and other defects and failures of the licensing system are well known. But, the control system alone was not responsible. The policy makers or planners themselves were not very clear about the objectives, did not formulate the policies in clear-cut and unambiguous terms and did not lay down definite criteria for guidelines for implementation. The tendency has continued even today as is evident from the more recent legislation on Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practice. True, the administrative machinery failed to adhere to the creation of capacities in line with Plan priorities and targets, but the planners themselves were not clear about priorities and the targets were not specifically laid down. Certain broad areas were listed as priority areas but not priorities inter se. There was no clear conception of either capacities or relative priorities.

With regard to targetting, the advocates of free enterprise would criticise the Indian planning as an exercise in detailed targetry. Their approach, as distinct from the consistency approach, was that economic optimality considerations would be divorced from targetting between commodities. Targetting as a spe-cial case of demand forecasting might be an important and useful tool even in a free market operation! Leaving aside the academic issues, it should be emphasised that targetting either did not exist in many commodities or was not used for operational purposes under Indian planning.

What really happened was not detailed targetting, but lack of it. It seemed that the technique of partial analysis was mainly used and the consistency approach was not taken care of in detailed operational product planning in India. One of the reasons for the ineffective licensing system itself was the lack of a properly worked out plan of development. Therefore, the remedy lies not in doing away with target-ting, but in working out more detailed and consistent industry plans so that the licensing decisions would be taken on definite economic criteria rather than on ad hoc and purely discretionary considerations.

Not only were the policies characterised by ambivalence and vagueness, but also there were no explicit criteria to guide the administrative machinery in operating the control system. In the course of time, some guidelines began to emerge, particularly regarding the fields for licensing, minimum size of units, terms of collaboration, etc. In the absence of well defined ground rules, the decisions were allowed to be taken on pure discretion by the administrative machinery.

In short, the policy makers were not clear about their objectives and did not clearly lay down guidelines for their attainment. The administrative machinery was not competent enough to meet the requirements of

a growing economy and was subject to pressures and pulls and, therefore, took decisions on ad hoc and short run consideration. The overall result of all these and other anomalies was that the licensing system did not contribute adequately to the attainment of social and economic objectives. The failure seemed, however, due more to the improper way the control system was organised rather than the inherent limitations of the system as such.

In the light of the findings of the expert committees, particularly on the protracted procedures and delays, the licensing policies did witness some changes in recent times in the direction of liberalisation. As a result of the Swaminathan Committee Report, some rationalisation in the procedure was introduced and a policy of delicensing was adopted for some industries on the basis of their foreign exchange implication. The Hazari Report also recommended exemption from licensing (delicensing) of cases up to rupees one crore on similar grounds.

The delicensing of any industry irrespective of its priority or capacity consideration on grounds that it was not dependent on the import of capital goods is a misconception about the role of licensing. Licensing is an allocative mechanism for channelling resources in the appropriate direction for achieving the objective of accelerated planned development. It is not a device primarily meant to conserve foreign exchange.

As a part of the revision of the regime of controls, the suggestion for delicensing industries has now become a tendency. Once an industry is delicensed, is there anything to ensure that there will be no over-expansion of that industry (i.e., capacity creation in excess of Plan target)? Will such over-expansion in a low priority area be consistent with the objective of a balanced structural growth of industries? Will the social objective enumerated in the Industrial Policy Resolution be ensured under a general delicensed scheme? Are the markets so perfect? Can mar-

ket forces be relied upon for automatic corrections towards planned economic development?

If we accept that planned development is necessary for the attainment of the socio-economic objectives, licensing will have to continue as an instrument for industrial planning. If the system of licensing is abrogated by a generalised policy of delicensing, plan priorities will lose their importance and will subject the economy to demand uncertainties, excess capacity and instability of the market imperfections. Despite the abuses and anomalies observed in the organisation of the licensing system, the qualitative concept of industrial growth achieved under the licensing regime has indeed been significant.

It is doubtful whether the substantial growth of heavy industries and the extent of diversification in the industrial structure would have been achieved in an alternate system. Of course, the free enterprise philosophers might argue that, even at the time of Independence, the Indian economy was well equipped with entrepreneurial ability, factor availability and socio-economic overheads and that an experiment in industrialisation relying purely or primarily on market forces was feasible. This line of argument is based on fiction rather than on the historical facts of Indian industrialisation!

The Indian experience with the licensing system in the past was not encouraging because the system was not properly organised to serve the objectives it was supposed to serve. It needs to be stressed that economic mal-administration is one thing; but on that ground to make out a case for economic libearlisation and to restore our faith in the invisible hands of the market mechanism is another matter. The regime of controls can well be freed from many of its appendages but the system has to remain wherever it is necessary for the fulfilment of our economic goals.

For instance, priority industries lagging behind in capacity may perhaps be freed from detailed

licensing subject to some total limit, but the growth of non-essential industries may have to be placed under more detailed control. The idea is not to suggest a generalised policy of delicensing (as the tendency has been of late) which would take away the basic advantages of planning but to make use of the licensing system for preventing structural distortions and lopsidedness, both spatially and sectorally, in industrial growth. There could still be issues like the use of fiscal and commercial policies versus the use of direct physical control.

In clear-cut cases and for specific purposes there can hardly be valid arguments for the continuance of physical control, e.g., the use of taxation to mop-up black market premia on automobiles created by the allocative system. Auctioning of available foreign exchange for mopping up black market earnings may be another case. But, to suggest that fiscal measures can be relied upon to regulate the growth of 'low priority' industries or industries in general is to rely too much upon the perfectness of the market and infallibility of the price mechanism.

A general policy of fiscal, credit and commercial incentives or penalties cannot substitute the industrial licensing system for regulating in-dustrial development according to the plans. At the same time, industrial licensing alone may not adequately channellise private investment into the priority areas, backward regions or in the planned directions and therefore the arsenel of fiscal, monetary, credit and other policy weapons should complement it to ensure speedy industrial develop-What is required is not to ment. remove licensing and to permit unplanned industrial development, but to prepare detailed and coordinated industrial plans, to simplify licensing and other control measures and to organise the system efficiently by laying down clearly defined standards and ground rules to give positive direction to the executive machinery for administering the control system in coordination with well-designed fiscal and monetary policies.

Control and regulations

I. Z BHATTY

ORTHODOXY in economic theory views the competitive market system as the ideal institution for ensuring the most gainful, by any optimality criteria, micro as well as macro economic results. The system symbolised by Adam Simth's 'invisible hand', however, has never been fully operative and for a variety of reason it has been necessary for the more obtrusive and visible hand of the State to intervene.

The fact is that, given the right to private property, the 'invisible hand' is self-defeating as it immediately releases tendencies towards monopolistic concentration of economic power, and its motivational base, while efficient for securing private gains, is weak for promoting social development. The inadequacy of the competitive market system is even more marked in a modern developing country which

has inherited a legacy of extreme inequality in economic power and is faced with the formidable problems of accelerating the pace of social development.

There are several areas in which State intervention becomes essential in a developing country. Firstly, those crucial sectors of the economy which require large investments, have relatively long gestation lags and involve relatively greater risk. A good part of this area is often described as the 'infra-structure' and includes besides the utilities some heavy and basic industries, such as steel and heavy machinery. As gains from these industries depend on development in other areas, no private investor is likely to be induced to invest in them. Some of the infra-structure industries are natural monopolies, i.e., for reasons of efficiency and, therefore, in the interest of the consuming public a monopolistic organisation is preferable. The supply of power, for example, is more efficient with an inter-connected regional grid.

Second, apart from industries which require direct investment by the State, there are several where competition without regulation is not to the benefit of society. Among such industries are essential food products, drugs and medicines or those industries which, in one way or another, are pre-requisite for the development or health of the economy. All of these industries rightly become the subject of State regulation.

Third, a developing country characterised by scarcities of various kinds and committed to raising the levels of living of the people must exercise control on the distribution of scarce materials or services on the one hand, to protect the cost structure and, on the other, to insulate household consumption, so far as possible, from cost erosion.

Finally, a developing country which has accepted the responsibility of planning for growth (and most developing countries have) must influence a wide range of private investment decisions in order to maintain a proper balance between growth in the different sectors of the economy and between short term and long term growth objectives.

Regulation of the economy by the State in all its manifestations is guided by economic policy and implemented through certain policy Operationally, the instruments. latter constitute the means for achieving the pre-determined ends which ultimately are non-economic -a good life, social justice, equal opportunity for all, etc. It is clearly not within the province of economics to set out criteria for determining the non-economic ends for a society but, given these, it is the business of economics to inform the policy-maker under what conditions optimum economic results consistent with the non-economic ends can be achieved.

Essentially, the optimum economic results that are sought to be achieved stem from the use of a society's limited resources in such a way that

maximum consumer satisfaction is ensured, allowing for some politically acceptable trade off between short and long term gains. Economic principles which guide the attainment of these results can also be identified with a set of behavioral rules for regulating economic institutions, decisions and activity.

Lt is obvious that no set of simple rules can solve all policy problems of regulation. An economy is a complex organic structure with its sectors and sub-sectors each having an unique identification and yet closely inter-related with each other. The social and economic purposes which regulation is expected to serve are also a mix with compowhich nents are necessarily consistent with each other. These complexities do not, however, mean that policy should be left to political judgements or pressures in a democratic society, for as Kahn says, 'the job is likely to be very badly done if it is not informed by a clear grasp of the common economic principles and considerations'.1

The application of 'common economic principles and considerations' is not as simple as it seems. It has often meant a simple slide back to a predisposition in favour of the competitive market system. Consequently, one often finds a generalised solution to all problems of regulation which simply pleads for the liberation of the market. For example, it is often claimed that a low official rate of interest has acted as a disincentive for saving and, in conjunction with an overvalued foreign exchange rate, promoted the adoption of highly capital intensive technology in the industry sector. By implication, had the two rates been determined by the market, both of these undesirable effects could have been avoided. free the market.

Actually, the first claim has no empirical evidence to support it; in fact, there is evidence that the saving behaviour is not significantly related to the official interest rate. The second claim is indeed quite

baseless. It is usually made in the context of some mythical intermediate technology which would have been adopted had the market mechanism been allowed more free play. But myths apart, the fact is that over 90 per cent of the Indian labour force is employed in labour intensive (by any standards) activities. The remaining labour force is employed in such industries which can be set up with any other technology only at a considerable loss in efficiency.

It is very doubtful whether export expansion of the sixties would have occurred without the capital intensive investments of the late fifties and the early sixties. A comparison with Japan usually made in this context lacks appreciation of the fact that this country has consistently opted for the latest (and capital intensive) technology irrespective of cost and that India has often not done so.

Myint rightly suggests that the approach to the question of control and regulation in developing economies should be functional.² In other words, a system of controls which functionally relates economic policy with its objectives, determined in response to certain recognised social needs, should be judged primarily in terms of the efficiency with which it performs its functions. If imports are controlled in pursuance of a policy to substitute imports, the relevant question is not what should have been the policy if there was a free market in operation, but did import control result in as much import substitution as was aimed at. One is not really concerned in this context with the rationale of the policy but with the rationale of the choice of the instruments to implement it and the efficiency with which these instruments are, in practice,

Basically, regulation or control is exercised by manipulating price or by imposing restrictions on entry in or expansion of selected industries. With either of these controls may also go control on distribution and/or movement; occasionally,

^{1.} Alfred E. Kahn, The Economics of Regulation: Principles and Institutions, Vol. I: Principles, 1970, page 14.

H. Myint, Economic Theory and the Underdeveloped Countries, 1971, pp. 291-292.

these controls may be exercised independently. The method of control can either be indirect or direct. Indirect methods of regulation work through the market mechanism with the aid of such tools as, foreign exchange rate, the rate of interest, tariffs price support, taxes, etc. The object is to alter market prices according to a pre-determined design; once this is done all other economic decisions are taken in response to the altered prices.

According to calculations on which market price alterations are based, it is expected that the induced set of decisions, ultimately leading to commodity or service outputs, would be in greater conformity with the targets of planning. Direct controls on the other hand aim at regulating physical quantities of commodities or factors of production by such instruments as licences, permits, quotas, rationing, etc. Just as indirect controls have an impact on output, controls on physical quantities have an impact on prices. Direct controls, therefore, very often entail regulation of prices as well and along with it the relevant areas of distributive trade. Though not inevitably, direct controls do tend to set off a chain reaction of regulatory measures and hence make a much more complex impact on the economy.

In a mixed economy, indirect controls convert the otherwise autonomous market mechanism into an instrument of economic policy. Given a set of objectives to be achieved and the relevant economic policy, appropriate private decisions can be engineered by manipulating the market 'signals'. The other instrument for implementing policy is, of course, the administrative machinery. Here decisions are not taken in response to market 'signals' but are taken directly by the administration in conformity with some extra market logic. It is implicitly or explicitly assumed that the noninvolvement of the market, even when it is engineered, would produce more efficient results.

In India both instruments of control are widely used, sometimes exclusively, at others jointly or simultaneously. An example of the

former is a low official rate of interest and of the latter an overvalued foreign exchange rate coupled with physical control over imports. It is a characteristic of the Indian control system that it abounds in examples of the latter type. If one examines the controls under the Essential Commodities Act, one is struck by the number of commodities whose production, price and distribution are all controlled simultaneously. One naturally wonders why it should be necessary to control the same commodity at each stage of its journey from the factory to the consumer. Would not the same results be achieved by exercising control at one stage?

The answer to this question is partly historical. Practically the entire gamut of legislation under which control is exercised was in existence more or less in the present form before India gained its independence. The broad purpose of control then was also the same as it is now, but its scope has greatly altered both in extent and complexity. The adoption of planning in a mixed economy following Independence led to a progressively more detailed articulation of both economic and social objectives.

Planning, simultaneously, made it necessary to ensure the utmost coordination between sectors and sub-sectors and over time. The enhanced need for regulation that these set of circumstances induced immediately brought the existing legislation, empowering the government to control, into the forefront. There was nothing simpler than to press this ready-made machinery into service.

To start with, this was the obvious course to take, but some time soon after when it was clear that a much more complex job was at hand, there ought to have been a thorough reappraisal of the control machinery and a new rationale for the system to suit the changed circumstances. There should at least have been a conscious evaluation of the merits of different methods of control. Unfortunately, the government has persistently shied off this task and has continued

to use the inherited machinery for control with no more than ad hoc modifications from time to time.³

As a result, the system has grown by sheer piecemeal accretion and not by any creative response to a challenging and dynamic situation. What we see now, therefore, is a plethora of controls where the rule seems to be that the left hand should not know what the right is up to. It has become common practice to introduce a measure of control at any point which seems out of line without much forethought about its linked repercussions.

Anyone confronted with the system is overwhelmed both by the multiplicity of controls and the lack of an over-all design to integrate them. It is true that the pursuit of a socialist society in a mixed economy has led to the adoption of a complex set of objectives, some of them conflicting with each other. But this is surely not the reason for having a complex system of controls, also internally conflicting with each other. While there is a trade off between conflicting ends, there is none between conflicting means to achieve the same end. One would venture to suggest that the more complex the set of objectives to be achieved, the more simple should be the system of controls required for it.

While using the market as an instrument for regulation, the government seems to evince a general lack of confidence in it. Consequently, price control is very often accompanied by direct physical control on production as well. This lack of confidence is perhaps bred by experience, but one can easily identify two reasons for it.

First, there has rarely been any careful study to determine the ex-

^{3.} Cohen & Ranis make a point about the second post-war restructuring of the regulatory system in the developing countries. Actually they are talking about policy and not about the instruments of regulation. In India and perhaps in other countries as well there have been shifts in policy to attain the same objectives mainly in response to changing circumstances, but there has not been any significant restructuring of the system of regulation.

tent and nature of price control to achieve the ends in view. Reliance is mainly put on bureaucratic judgement and quite often the determining influence is permitted to pass into the hands of the politicians. Take, for instance, the procurement price of wheat which is being fixed by a consensus of the State Chief Ministers and not on the basis of the recommendations of the Agricultural Prices Commission—an expert body appointed for the purpose.

Second, in the jungle of controls that has sprung up it is practically impossible to analyse the impact of any single control measure. The situation is made worse by the uncoordinated manner in which the control mechanism works. Once a control measure is instituted by one authority there is no certainty that there will not be other measures in related fields brought in quite independently by other authorities.

Thus, while the well known market signals have been disrupted no other set of signals have been evolved to provide the necessary guidance. This has strengthened the tendency to use more and more direct controls (licenses, permits, quotas, etc.) with the administrative machinery as the instrument of control. In the process, bureaucracy has gained in power and patronage and having acquired a vested interest has, in turn, sustained the process.

The situation has been aggravated by two factors: First, the mush-rooming of controls has further multiplied the sheer paper work necessary to obtain the requisite permits, licenses, etc., and in the process, (a) eliminated the less stout hearted among the applicants and (b) induced ingenious methods, not always above board, for cutting corners.

Second, lack of free mobility between the bureaucracy and the business world has fostered an atmosphere of suspicion in the bureaucratic mind regarding the bona fides of the businessman. Stances are therefore taken on either side which confuse the issue, and result in skewing the decision

making process. Desai has shown how a similar formal control structure in Japan produces much more efficient results on account of the class homogeneity and greater mobility between the bureaucracy and the business executives.⁴

It is not only efficiency which is a casualty in the failure to rationalise the control system; the effort to achieve the very objectives for which the use of controls is justified is seriously undermined. Consider, for example, the number of direct controls which govern entry into an industry. Their multiplicity and the fact that they are administered by the bureaucracy have stacked all the cards in favour of the large businessman who alone is capable of coping with the situation. The small businessman who is meant to be favoured is the one who is left out in the cold. It is this kind of thing that Myrdal describes as pushing the accelerator down to the floor and jamming the breaks at the same time.

Apart from control measures which aim at keeping the investment behaviour of others in line, the government itself makes many in-Here, again, vestment decisions. one is confronted with lack of seriousness about efficiency both in taking the decisions and in implementing them. A project is so often taken up without adequate study and project preparation, that its execution not only becomes difficult but costs much more both in time and money. It is not uncommon to find that a project has cost three times more than the original estimate and it has taken much longer to complete than anticipated.

This kind of variation is indefensible. In this area it is relatively simple to take more efficient decisions as fairly refined techniques of cost benefit analysis are available and adequate competence exists in the country to prepare fairly sophisticated project reports. But the use of these techniques must be induced by an insistence on the part of the authority which approves proposals

that preparatory work is fully and in detail accomplished before a proposal is submitted. This must then be followed up by performance budgeting and not merely a monetary accounting of disbursement of allotted funds. And this should be done even at the risk of a fewer approved projects to start with.

The answer is not quite that simple for the regulatory system as a whole. No purpose is served by an ideological adherence to the virtues of a competitive market, because regulation is necessary (and desirable) for planning in a developing economy. Nor is much likely to be gained by introducing greater sophistication in formal consistency models for planning. What is required is a managerial approach to deal with the mechanics of implementing policy. Feed back, so necessary for policy formulation or modification, presupposes the existence of an efficient regulatory system. In its absence, any appraisal of policy must, in good measure, resort to a priori judgement. This is hardly a satisfactory basis for managing a planned economy.

Lt seems it is necessary, to start. with, to institute a detailed scrutiny of the regulatory system to (a) assess whether the multiplicity of controls that exists are necessary to achieve the given objectives, (b) identify those control measures or some details of any control measure which are redundant or could be done away with by making minor modifications in other measures without loss of achievement, (c) identify control measures which are mutually conflicting either in terms of the objective sought to be achieved or in terms of subserving conflicting objectives and (d) evaluate the associated procedural network with a view to rationalise and simplify. Armed with the results of this scrutiny there should then be a candid reappraisal of the merits of alternate instruments of control to achieve the same results, keeping in mind that direct controls through the administrative machinery, (a) make a more complex and therefore less predictable impact on the economy, (b) are more restrictive and (c) increase the scope of bureaucratic patronage and, hence, corruption.

Ashok Desai, Imports of Technology and Capital; A Second Look, Margin Vol. 4 No. 2 January 1972, pp. 58-59.

Scope of policy

M. V. NAMJOSHI

THERE have been several advances in industrial policy since the 1956 Industrial Policy Resolution. On the promotional side, the most important development has been the setting up of a number of public sector financing agencies. On the regulatory side, we have the rough division of the economy into the core sector, a relatively unregulated middle sector, and small scale industries. We also have a Monopolies and Restricted Trade Practices Act. The ways of operation of both the promotional and regulatory agencies are still very much under discussion. There is also much discussion about the new components to be added to industrial policy in order to make it consistent with the new Congress programme and a radical plan frame.

Interpreting the post-1956 developments and proposing new developments has to be done against the backdrop of (1) the current political situation and (2) the fourth plan strategy.

(a) The Political Background: A very radical reorganization of the Congress would be necessary if the problem of the under-privileged and the problem of disciplining the elites are to be simultaneously solved. This, however, is not realistic. Only a limited re-organization of the Congress has taken place. Its effect so far as big business is concerned will at best be to force an acceptance of the concept of the joint sector. On the other hand the use of a variety of public institutions to secure a better distribution of production opportunities to the under-privileged in rural and urban areas is possible with relatively limited political reorganization. International comparisons reinforce this argument. The Chinese Communist Party went too far in abandoning a class basis and this led to a number of international and national difficulties. The recent Chilean experience of taking a revolutionary approach to private property within the framework of parliamentary procedures and the rule of law is probably less stable but more suggestive.

(b) The Fourth Plan as Backdrop: It is also necessary to consider the fourth five-year plan as a backdrop. Two requirements of the fourth five-year plan are a high rate of growth and overcoming the employment backlog. Each of these has certain implications for industrial policy.

A high rate of growth requires that both public and private investment should be such as to maximize growth. This requires a framework of policies relating to property forms. Shareholding must attract more funds and not speculation in urban and rural land or investment in gold, etc. Attracting more money to shareholding does not imply that concentration of economic power on the basis of shareholding can be permitted. On the other hand, one has to restrict the powers of shareholder so that entrepreneurs and shareholders cannot force inequitable distribution to accompany growth.

The legal rights of shareholders have, therefore, to be derived from concepts of optimal business organization oriented to stated goals rather than from concepts relating to the property rights of real or constructed individuals. The net effect would be to provide reasonable incentives and a framework of conditions in which other forms of investment would be closed or less attractive after certain per capita limits.

The other plan requirement we mentioned related to employment. Additional employment and small farmer production in the rural areas may require a transfer of resources to consumer goods industries and cost reduction in these industries. It is said that both government and business houses have been responsible for the emergence of sick units in industries like sugar. The expansion in production in such

fields can hardly be left to private business. An increased public or co-operative share is clearly implied. In a case like textiles where much of the supply might have to be obtained from small scale units, a joint sector operation with the government being responsible for marketing on the one hand and the creation of demand through appropriate employment policies on the other, may have to be thought of. In textiles, only export oriented units could continue to be in the private sector.

We next discuss the post-1956 additions to the promotional and regulatory apparatus; namely, the public sector financial agencies, the new licensing provisions, and the entirely new anti-monopoly provisions, respectively.

A fairly complete reorganization of the arrangements for both shortterm and long-term finance can now be visualized. The emergence of the public sector financial institutions, the nationalization of banks. and the likelihood of the adoption of policies relating to property forms provide a framework for rational operations. It is possible for the public shareholding institutions and short-term financing institutions to so operate as to encourage optimal sizes and to minimise the connection between economic growth and the concentration of economic power.

The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act and licensing policy has to provide a link between the over-all plan and the plan for the particular industry. A balancing of the various government policy objectives in each industry is essential before these authorities can operate effectively. Initially, there is a case to confining their operation to the core sector for which very detailed policy proposals have to be worked out in each industry.

Finally, a few remarks on making the industrial policy consistent with the new Congress programme.

The line of argument developed in this note assumes that the legislation on urban ceiling would be mainly intended to facilitate socially oriented urban development and

eliminate speculation in land in expanding cities. We have also assumed that the government will go slow in hurting the rich, whether this be desirable or not. As regards the problem of rural poverty a combination of employment policies, redistribution of new financial and physical inputs for modernizing small farms, taxation measures identical with the urban sector, and a lowering of rural ceiling only if urban ceilings are equally low, is the probable approach. As regards urban poverty, an incomes and prices policy seems possible.

If this be the probable approach the main new lines of industrial policy required would be relating to shareholding, on the one hand, and the allocation of funds to public and co-operative industries in the consumer goods sector, on the other.

The adoption of a policy relating to shareholding rights would have to be linked with the total policy of all forms of property on the one hand, and with the requirements of cost reduction in industry on the other. It would result, as stated above, in adding a socially oriented concept of shareholders' rights to the other concepts of management rights that have already been evolved. A logical adjustment of the rights of shareholders, management, and promotional and regulatory authorities has to provide the basis for the rationalization of industry.

As regards the development of public and co-operative industries two conditions seem important. One is that simultaneous measures have to be taken for creating low cost supplies and for creating demand for these supplies through employment policies. The other requirement is a clear definition of the concepts of vested interests and weaker sections with reference to the national economy as well as with reference to limited sectors. This would help prevent the new sectors (public, cooperative and joint) becoming vested interests in their own right. The scope of industrial policy has thus also to be expanded to promote and regulate not only the private but also the public and co-operative sectors.

Tender system

F. A. MEHTA

IS it possible to give a new orientation to the implementation of the current industrial licensing policy in such a manner that, without sacrificing the socio-economic goals desired by government, there is, all the same, a marked improvement in the 'efficiency' of the industrial licensing system as an instrument of planning?

This 'efficiency' is to be judged from at least three angles. Firstly, and most obviously, there must be a reduction in the enormous delays that now take place as a matter of course, particularly in the case of major projects. Although in theory there is supposed to be considerable 'co-ordination' among the different ministries and departments involved, one often witnesses the spectacle of the parties involved trying to blame each or one another for the delays. This is quite apart from the delays that take place due to 'insufficient' or 'incomplete information' supplied by an applicant-company from the private sector industry. The costs of these delays are too well known to be recounted here.

Secondly, there must be a 'quality of depth' imparted to the techno-

economic investigations preceding the grant of a license. It has been said times out of number that one of the main reasons for the poor performance of several public sector projects has been the lack of adequate preparatory work; for one thing, 'depth-studies' are not made. and for another thing, non-economic considerations sometimes determine the 'economics' of the project from the very start. Although this may be less true of the private sector industries, it still remains true that both in the private and public sectors of industry the requisite amount of preparatory work essential to the future success of the project is not jeopardised.

In fact, one may be forgiven for asserting that in very recent times, the so-called 'speedy' manner in which licenses have been dispensed have made it very difficult to have this preparatory work done, for this involves time which cannot be allowed to pass by lest other entrepreneurs competing for the same licenses may secure them first. With the 'larger industrial houses' virtually out of the picture, and the legitimate desire of government to

encourage new entrepreneurs from both the private sector and from the State Developmental Corporations, there has been a great rush to grab licenses irrespective of whether or not the parties involved have the necessary capabilities to fructify these licenses.

Une reason for the current low rate of utilisation of industrial licenses-a factor which the Planning Commission has rightly held responsible for the low rate of growth in the new installed capacity in industry—is that many 'new' entrepreneurs have won their licenses without doing their homework. To some extent, this defect will hopefully be made up by the scrutiny to which the public sector financial institutions would subject these projects at the time of granting financial assistance, to some extent also, the increasing use of consultants should help.

Without in any way belittling the legitimate aim of government to encourage 'new entrepreneurs', the fact must then be faced that the grant of licenses in which neither the government nor the parties concerned have really done their homework will not only result in a very substantial delay in the 'start-up schedule' but will also delay the 'gestation-period' in so far as the impact of various factors may not have been adequately taken into account (not to speak of the likelihood of cost over-runs). This is apart from the possibility of a more-than average rate of 'dropouts' among the new entrepreneurs. The morale of all this is not that the new entrepreneurs should not be encouraged—certainly, should be-but:

- a. that there should be some balance in the grant of industrial licenses between the old and the new entrepreneurs; and
- b. that a great deal of solid homework needs to be done not after but before the grant of industrial licenses.

Unless these conditions are fulfilled, the mere grant of indus-

trial licenses on a large scale carries with it no promise whatsoever of their eventual implementation, or at any rate of their 'timely' fructification. The mere fact that the help of 'techno-economic consultants' is feverishly taken at the time for filling in the forms involved in the application of industrial licenses must not be confused with the solid preparatory work that is required for an industrial project. The 'new entrepreneurs' are hardly to be blamed for this situation; faced with the possibility that the licenses will be offered to other parties, they have to seize the opportunity as it comes—in at least two cases known to this writer, the entrepreneurs after winning the licenses discovered that the fields they were supposed to enter were so 'tough' that they currently have little idea of how they are to go about implementing The lines involve a very them. high degree of 'skill-formation', and promises high profitability only after a substantially long period of waiting. Even the original 'consultants' seem not to have done their homework.

here is a third set of factors involved under our present system of industrial licensing. The country has in effect no way of knowing the 'costs' of the social goals which are apparently incorporated into a particular industrial project. Not for one moment is it contended that such broad or narrow 'goals of social iustice' must be totally excluded, but the 'costs' of such goals must be made known as best as they admit of quantification. For example, it will be readily agreed that in the interest of promoting 'balanced regional development' it is imperative that industries be started in what have come to be called 'backward areas'. In the initial stages at any rate, this will involve conscious economic costs (else how does the question of subsidies come up in this connection?), but just as when a country accepts protection for its infant industries, it makes known the visible and invisible costs of such 'protection', so also it is only fair that a country must know the

'costs' involved in promoting socioeconomic goals.

It is useless to ask that economic projects be judged purely on economic criteria—this, particularly in a democracy, (and a federal democracy at that), is an impossible thing to ask for; what may be worth asking from a high techno-economic body like the Planning Commission or even the relevant Ministry concerned are the 'costs' of implementing such goals. If a desired volume of production can be achieved by the creation of one or two 'optimumsized' plants but social or strategic reasons require that smaller plants be set up in eight to ten different regions of the country, what are the economic costs involved? reverse, if a new technology is innovated to short-circuit the use of scarce raw materials within the country, what additional 'weightage' is to be given to it by the appli-cation of, say, the 'shadow-rate of pricing'?

These questions can be brushed aside as academic only by the economically illiterate; they involve questions of economic costs, which if not answered, may well give the country a basically uneconomic industrial system resulting in a highcost structure. This would particularly be so in a country where price-controls have become, formally or informally, an integral part of economic administration, so that the true scarcity-values of the inputs used are not known, and the actual measure of the 'subsidies' given to a particular project using such pricecontrolled items is hidden from the gaze of public accountability.

We then need a system of industrial licensing which minimises delay and with it its severe penalties, which safeguards a project with a substantive amount of preparatory work, and which while accepting the 'socio-economic goals' dictated by government, makes known, as best as can be done in terms of a social cost/benefit analysis, the costs involved.

One way of doing this is to apply more intensively what may be called the tender-system of industrial

licensing'. This is by no means a new suggestion. Tatas had suggested it in a communication to the then Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission in 1964, while Dr. R. K. Hazari in his Final Report on Industrial Planning and Licensing Policy, submitted to the government in 1967, made a specific plea for some such system in the following words: 'Given the feasibility reports, demand estimates and decisions on the number of units to be licensed, the licensing process would be somewhat analogous to inviting tenders, from which a selection can be made (and a waiting list maintained) on the basis of the lowest foreign exchange cost, inclusive of collaboration servicing payments, if any, and maintenance imports over a specified period. While making this selection, the licensing authority must be quite clear about whether the projects covered are to be set up at any cost or, with reference to international costs and the possibility of reaching parity with them in the foreseeable future, taking, where necessary, import duties into account.'

- 1. The starting point of the 'tender-system' would be the preparation (on the ABC principle of management) of what may be called the 'priority' or 'core' industries in terms of the desired priorities of the Plan. These industries, numbering about 35 to 40, would presumably account for something like 60 to 65 per cent of the rupee and foreign exchange resources of the overall allocation made to industry and mining in the Plan.
- 2. The priority being assigned to these industries on the basis of their important backward and forward linkage effects, the next step would be an estimation of the level and type of demand by the end of a specific time-period—in our case, presumably, by the end of the fifth five-year plan in 1978-79.
- 3. This is the beginning of something like an Industry Plan but at this stage it must be exposed to the 'overall directives' of the Cabinet Economic Sub-Committee. These directives will not over-ride the 'techno-economic' issues—in-

deed, they will take them into account at every stage. What needs to be done at this stage is to state the broad 'socio-economic' directives based on the coordinated recommendations of all-repeat, of all—the ministries and departments concerned. Instead of the various governmental bodies, each queueing up with their own list of objections and guide-lines after the submission of the licence applications, and causing interminable delays, the tender-system will require thorough co-ordination from these bodies before the applications are invited from the different bodies. In other words, a great deal of coordinated staff-planning work will necessarily have to be done in advance.

- 4. Once this is done, the government tender inviting applications will set out at length the terms and conditions that must be fulfilled so that all the parties involved have a clear idea of the issues at stake. Governmental priorities regarding the 'optimum' scales of output, the location of the industrial units, the type of entrepreneurship desired, the pattern of ownership sought, the quality of technology required, the permissible technical fees and royalties-all these together with other desiderate would be indicated at length in the tender inviting applications from all parties outside the public sector.
- 5. Central to the 'tender-system' will be the principle of what may be called 'the Index of Privileges'. Thus:
- * new entrepreneurs will be given a certain Index of Privileges over the existing or established industries in accordance with the government's aim of diffusing ownership and control; (within the new entrepreneurship itself, there can be a gradation depending on the criteria to be chosen by government);
- * entrepreneurs who declare in their license applications their willingness to go to 'backward areas' can also be given a certain Index of Privileges;
- * this Index of Privileges will take the shape of offering various faci-

lities to the entrepreneurs who satisfy the 'socio-economic priorities of the government, such as lower rates of interest; lower rates of taxation; subsidies deprived to other entrepreneurs or higher rates of subsidies; lower freight rates; etc.

- * The Index of Privileges will serve as a powerful instrument of serving the goals established by government. It will make explicit and quantify the benefits which government will give to those license-applicants who meet its requirements. More specifically, the 'newer' and/or 'weaker' applicants will be able, in the preparation of their cash-flows and profitability estimates, to take into account the various advantages offered to them via lower rates of interest, taxation, freight, etc. They can, other things being equal, hope to overcome the disadvantages of a late start.
- * If, in spite of all these advantages, the final economics of their projects as measured by
 - (a) the capital costs per tonne,
 - (b) the foreign exchange required per tonne,
- (c) the price per tonne, still shows them incapable of competing with the projects submitted by the other license-applicants who do not have these advantages at all or in the same measure, then only in very special cases must a departure be made.

In this brief article, it has not been possible to dot every 'i' and to cross every 't'. Obviously, considerable more elaboration would be required in order to meet the variety of objections that can be raised against this outline of the 'Tender System of Industrial Licensing'. Nevertheless, if this article has served the purpose of arousing some interest in the possibility of applying this scheme, it will have served its purpose.

Already, a beginning has been made in this direction by the government taking the initiative in issuing press notifications in specific items of production inviting prospective entrepreneurs to apply for licences. But what is now needed is not only an extensive application

of this approach but of an elaborate statement which, representing a coordinated approach of the various ministries and departments involved, sets out clearly but not rigidly the type of conditions which government would like the prospective licence-applicants to bear in mind, and through these conditions, to 'structure' the key features of an industry as best desired by government.

Emphatically, this should not imply rigidity, and indeed where innovative approaches are suggested by the prospective licence-applicants of a type not previously taken into account by government in their industry plans and subsequently in the 'tenders' invited, they must necessarily be examined with an open mind. The essential point here is that in each major industry, whose growth is to be promoted, the prospective-applicants must have a fairly clear idea of the various conditions they must satisfy, the various concessions they will enjoy if they fulfil specific goals set by government, the various upper and lower limits that will be permitted to them in the matter of financing, buying foreign technology, and so on.

We now need a scheme whereby all the principal objections should be anticipated so far as humanly possible before, and not after, the industrial-licence applications are made. We now need a scheme under which governmental ministries and departments on the one side and the private sector applicants on the other side are compelled to do an enormous amount of homework before, and not after, the industrial licence-applications are made. We now need a scheme in which, while the socio-economic goals of government shall be adequately taken into account, there shall at the same time be a meaningful quantification of the cost to the country of deviations from the optimum economic goals. Not least of the merits of the 'Tender System of Licensing' will be that it will demonstrate socialism in action, not the negative socialism that rules out the contribution of specific parties, but the positive socialism that actively assists the new entrepreneurs and, in particular, the 'weaker entrepreneurs'.

An alternative approach

DEEPAK LAL

LAST year will go down in Indian history as a turning point. Mrs. Gandhi showed great political skill in providing India with internal stability and reducing the threats to her security—two preconditions for any rapid economic advance which had been lacking for over a decade. The opportunities provided be seized, if this decade too is not to be a period of empty achievement.

The goal to be achieved is adequately summed up in 'growth with social justice.' The problem, as always, concerns the means to achieve these. At the moment, the means being used or mooted are counter-productive. Moreover, the appropriate means are not seen at present to be appropriate due to misconceptions which, for a lack of

a better word, may be called ideological.

To establish this I would like to contrast four possible ways of categorizing various economic systems. I will label these as market capitalism, bureaucratic capitalism, bureausocialism cratic and market socialism. The first word in each (market/bureaucratic) refers to the basic framework within which the allocative decisions determining the pattern of investment and production in the economy are made. The second word (capitalism/socialism) refers to the extent to which the pattern of income distribution is in practice altered from that which may be generated by private pre-ferences and market forces (capitalism) towards a more egalitarian pattern which is considered socially desirable (socialism). This applies equally to the distribution of the national product between consumption and savings, which determines the income distribution between generations, as well as the distribution of present consumption within the existing generation.

Given these definitions, the descriptive content of the four categories should be self-evident. However, in distinguishing socialism from capitalism, it is important to rely on action rather than words—socialist rhetoric is often used to cloak a capitalist reality.

The Indian economy during the past two decades would be a mixture of market capitalism in the predominant sector (agriculture) and bureaucratic capitalism in the industrial sector. That the Indian economy predominantly remained capitalist despite socialist intentions and slogans is borne out by a plethora of official and independent appraisals of income distribution changes during the last two decades. All the evidence points to no improvement and possibly a worsening in the distribution of income and wealth within the existing generations both in the rural countryside and in the urban-industrial sectors. While some success has been recorded in improving the inter-generational income distribution by increasing the rate of savings, through taxation, it is clear from the constant and continuing preoccupation with resource mobilization that not enough was done. Moreover, the power of fiscal instruments in reducing the consumption of the higher income groups, particularly in the urban areas, has been blunted by massive tax evasion and the corresponding phenomenal increase in black money, foreign exchange malpractices and smuggling.

It seems that the need and desire to move towards socialism has genuinely been grasped by the central government. There is even some hope that, at least in the agricultural sector, there may be progress towards this end through land reforms, with ceilings based on family land holdings, and direct taxation of agriculture. If these policies are successfully implemented, the resulting economic system in agriculture could move towards market socialism.

In the industrial-urban sector, however, the government's aim seems to be to change the capitalist component of the bureaucratic capitalism of the past and move to some form of bureaucratic socialism. The means to achieve this are the new industrial licensing policy, supplemented by import controls and the monopolies and restrictive practices legislation. It hopes to change the capitalist nature of the industrial-urban sector by bureaucratic means. Administrative allocations and socialism are seen to be inextricably entwined. It is this link between socialism and bureaucracy, so tenaciously held by our 1930 type socialists, which I would in particular like to question.

As the categories I have introduced suggest, it is fallacious to think that socialism and the use of markets and the price mechanism are incompatible. Socialism is essentially concerned with the distribution of income. Once this is determined and the ensuing pattern of demand for commodities (both in the present and the future) is given, the economic problem is of allocating existing resources most efficiently to meet this demand. The superiority of even an imperfect price mechanism in making these allocative decisions, when compared with bureaucratic allocation procedures, is borne out again both by official and independent appraisals of the working of direct controls in India.

It may be argued, however, that if in fact the government cannot operate directly on income distribution, then it might still be possible to obtain the desired income distribution indirectly by controlling the volume and pattern of the supply of commodities. This seems to have been the rationale in part behind Indian economic strategy in the past. Hence the attempt to control the savings rate by attempting to control the relative supply of investment and consumer goods, and within consumer attempting to limit the effects of an unequal distribution of income by limiting the supply of commodities likely to be demanded by the higher income groups. That these indirect means of influencing income distribution have proved futile is again borne out by innumerable studies. Socialism has not come one whit closer; bureaucratic capitalism has reigned triumphant.

The only way to usher in socialism therefore is to operate on the distributional pattern directly. Thus, the Soviet Union is socialist, primarily because of the direct control established over the pattern of its intra and inter-temporal income distribution, and not because it also happens to use bureaucratic procedures for making its allocative decisions—a process which is recognized as being inefficient by a number of Soviet economists.

This means that to achieve socialism it is necessary to operate directly on the income generating process by direct enforcement of the desired pattern of income distribution including the socially desired rate of savings. Adopting bureaucratic means would be counter productive.

The second test of the economic performance of any economic system is the efficiency with which given resources are transformed into current and future goods and services to attain the feasible producible maximum to meet the demand generated by the desired pattern of income distribution. The frame-

work within which the investment and production decisions of the economy are taken will largely determine its productive efficiency. Bureaucratic allocative procedures have been justified in India in the past as being essential to ensure that investment and production decisions were socially optimal, as there are limitations of an unfettered market and price mechanism in generating these socially optimal decisions.

However, direct controls and centralized economic planning can in principle or in practice achieve this social optimum. It is essentially a this social optimum. It is essentially a question of the requisite amount of information which the bureaucrats would need to derive the socially optimal investment and production decisions. It is possible to outline what, in principle, the task of a rational, detailed, administrative allocation of resources would involve. In making these allocations, it is important to remember that it is the relative social values of the inputs and outputs at the margin which are relevant. Thus, from the point of view of an individual enterprise, good allocation requires not a mere estimate of the value of copper or rubber or what have you, generally or on the average, or in the aggregate but, instead, an estimate of the value to the enterprise of an increment that might be added to its uses of it or a decrement by which its uses might be reduced.

In making such allocation decisions at the margin, down to the level of particular firms, the bureaucrats would need to know the detailed variable input-output coefficients of each firm and industry in the economy and, secondly, to assign relative social values to the inputs and outputs of each firm and industry in the economy. To state these requirements is to show the impossibility of fulfilling them in practice, given the existing state of the planning art. But this in effect is the task the administrative authorities have been called upon to undertake in the industrial sector in the past. Small wonder that they have fallen back on simple rules of thumb, which have often resulted in allocations without any economic rationale, and where even an imperfectly functioning price mechanism would have been better.

This does not imply, however, that laissez-faire is the correct industrial policy stance. Given divergence between private and social profitability in some existing markets and the absence or thinness of other markets, the government will have to intervene to try and correct market failures as best it can, and try to facilitate the creation and improvement of markets where they are absent or imperfect. The instruments to be used, however, must work through the price mechanism as alternative means (like direct controls) are likely to be inefficient. In general, these alternative instruments are classed as taxes and subsidies on the relevant commodities and factors of production. This substitution of indirect instruments of control (that is a move from bureaucratic to market allocative procedures) is one of the most vital economic reforms needed in India at the moment, as only then will the productive efficiency of the economy be improved.

Three types of argument are generally advanced by the advocates of direct controls against this move to more indirect means of economic management. The first states that price incentives and dis-incentives are likely to be ineffective, as the economy's response to relative price changes is likely to be sluggish if not absent. Hence the need to use direct administrative means to subserve the social objectives which an unfettered market mechanism cannot be expected to foster. Once again, all the empirical evidence is against this viewpoint, as it shows a marked sensitivity to price changes of the various decision makers in the economy—whether it be the 'backward' peasants' response to relative price changes in the price of agricultural commodities, or the private producers perceived inducement to invest in different lines of production in response to differing relative rates profitability different in industries.

The disbelief in the efficacy of operating a price mechanism

doctored by appropriate taxes and subsidies, can perhaps only be explained in terms of the Brahminical suspiciousness of our policy makers of the motives of most people. Hence the frequent wringing of hands about the attitudinal impediments to development—a belief butteressed by the voluminous writings on India of 'soft' western liberals suffering from a prolonged culture shock. Moreover, unlike some developing countries, there is no shortage of domestic entrepreneurship, nor the need to bring the bulk of the population into a market economy.

These preconditions for the successful operation of the price mechanism already exist. It may be that the pursuit of self-interest on which the functioning of the market mechanism depends, is not a very edifying moral quality. However, pragmatism dictates that until someone discovers the way to make some more desirable attribute the mainspring of human action, this particular trait of us mortals be accepted. To ignore it, to bypass it or to sermonize about it, is merely to bury one's head in the sand, as is amply borne out by the past experience with the operation of administrative controls in India, What is required is to utilise this private motive for public purposes by indirect alteration of the appropriate taxes and subsidies.

The second argument advanced against the substitution of prices for controls is one of irrelevance. Pro- = ductive efficiency does not matter: it is only the volume of savings and investment which matter—so runs this argument. Without disputing the need and importance of high savings rates, and once again emphasizing the importance of direct methods of controlling income distribution in achieving this end, it seems morally wicked to argue against the need for efficiency. Any increase in savings is at the expense of current consumption, which, given the pitifully low standards of living of the majority of the population, implies a very great sacrifice on their part. Hence, if any of this consumption foregone is wasted through inefficiencies in the process of productive transformation, it is a criminal waste. Even the mildest form of economic inefficiency, therefore, becomes intolerable in really poor countries.

The final argument in favour of direct controls relates to the desire to use them as an indirect instrument for instituting the socially optimal income distribution. The fallaciousness of this view has already been discussed and the need to operate directly on incomedistribution stressed. However, there is also the linked argument that it is necessary to use direct controls to limit the concentration of economic power in the industrial sector. The means proposed, in my view, will be counter productive. This is essentially because the cause of the disease has not been correctly diagnosed.

For most modern industry, scale is an important determinant of efficiency, and this can also apply to the operation of conglomerates which overcome the imperfections of the capital markets for the enterprises within their fold. Hence, it is not large scale firms and business groups which need to be disbanned and discouraged, but the big business families which use them to exercise economic power. It is the growth of these business families which has to be limited as it is socially undesirable that members of a particular family should be able to obtain and perpetuate the greater material benefits, earned by its pioneering members, indefinitely to their heirs.

Secondly, in a socialist society where the principle of merit should guide the recruitment to jobs, the perpetuation of decision making within a 'family' is likely to be unjust, as the ability of the members of the family is not likely to be the overriding criterion for the posts they fill in the family business group. Thirdly, it is only by breaking the feudal hold of the big business families over the centre of decision making within their groups that professional management, which is so essential for the next stage of Indian development, will arise and be nurtured.

- There are many ways of breaking the hold of the big business

families over the economy. Employment opportunities within the family business groups (and possibly in the private sector) should be denied to at least two generations of family members, who could, however, be encouraged to seek employment in the public sector. Public financial institutions, which now own a large part of the capital in the private sector, should only nominate managers, directors, etc., in these companies, who are not members of the dominant family in the business group. A stiffer wealth tax, probably on 'family' assets, could also be used to break the concentration of power. By contrast, the measures being currently planned-the new industrial licensing policy, and the MRTP act-will be mere palliatives which will not cure the disease.

Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that our future industrial policy subserves both the ends of efficiency and social justice. In achieving these ends it is essential to dismantle the existing direct controls on production and investment decisions in the economy, and to rely on indirect instruments to correct any divergences between private and social profitability that may emerge from the workings of the unfettered market mechanism. However, simultaneously it is imperative that direct means are used to achieve the desired pattern of income-distribution, and in particular the containment of the particular feature of Indian capitalism -the growth in the wealth and the economic power of the large business families. Instead of the current 'Growth nor social justice' we might then see the emergence of 'growth and social justice' in the urbanindustrial sector.

One of the most pernicious forms of economic madness which has spread in the post-war world to both developed and developing countries alike, is the politicising of the economic decision to alter a country's foreign exchange rate. This is partly due to the particular form of exchange rate adjustment internationally agreed to at Bretton

Woods—the adjustable peg system which only allows discontinuous changes in exchange rates, with all that this implies in terms of sudden shocks and adjustment problems, particularly in the relatively sluggish economies of developing countries.

In part, it is also linked to a deep suspicion of the processes of international trade in the developing countries which is not helped by the resurgent neo-mercantilism of the developed world. The collapse of international trade following the great depression of the 1920s and the emergence of 'beggar-thyneighbour' protective policies in the 1930s hit the Third World in the form of extreme fluctuations and adverse movements in their terms of trade. This generated a deep seated suspicion in these countries about the processes of free international trade and of claims about its mutually beneficial character. Export pessimism came to be the order of the day. As usual, theoreticians were at hand to buttress the popular but misplaced projection of pre-war trends in world trade into the post-war period. They built theoretical models with foreign exchange gaps which could not be closed except by a careful husbanding of assumed fixed export proceeds. They recommended the massive promotion of import substituting industrialisation behind protective walls, which would shield the nascent infant industries from the competition of the richer countries.

Some recent theoretical work in trade and development has been concerned with chipping away the intellectual basis of the arguments for protection. The general con-clusion is that nearly all the economic arguments for protection are 'second best' arguments. because there are superior policies in the form of domestic taxes and subsidies which would subserve the same ends as protection even better. Except for certain goods, increasing quantities of which can only be sold at declining prices on world markets (like tea, coffee etc), for the vast majority of other goods, free trade is the best policy for developing and developed countries alike. The protective policies which developing countries like India have followed, have therefore, necessarily damaged their own economic welfare by preventing them from making optimum use of a powerful engine of growth which would have enabled them to achieve a higher return from their development investment.

Moreover, the export pessimism on which the import substituting policies were based, was particularly misplaced given the phenomenal rate of expansion of post war international trade, the inability of India to maintain even its small share in world trade which, as a number of studies have shown, was the result of domestic policies rather than foreign protective devices, and the insignificant share of India's 'new manufactures' in total world trade in manufactures which would have made foreign retaliation unlikely. This does not imply that there are no problems in breaking into new export markets, nor that there is no need for further trade liberalisation in the developed countries. What can be said is that India failed to make the best use of the opportunities that were, and are available for increasing exports, and that this was basically the result of misguided domestic policies in the sphere of foreign trade and industrialisation.

The adverse effects of these foreign trade policies had many ramifications. The actual import substitution policies followed, directly and indirectly penalised exports. The heavy, often prohibitive protection offered to domestic manufacturers, made it unprofitable for producers to produce for anything but the domestic market. Lacking any foreign competition, and insulated from potential domestic competition by the restrictions on entry imposed by the industrial licensing system, domestic producers had no incentive to reduce costs or to improve the quality of their products. The sufferers on all counts were the poor consumers; the beneficiaries were the rich producers who made large profits through the indirect subsidy provided to them by the protective structure.

Given the disincentive to export (only partially corrected by the various complex, ad hoc, and often irrational export subsidy schemes) the rising import needs of capital and intermediate goods, and the reluctance to use exchange rate adjustments to cure the balance of payments deficits which were instead sought to be cured by further import controls (which in turn further penalised exports and led to more balance of payments crises), it is not surprising that chronic balance of payments deficits came to be the order of the day. The foreign exchange gap theory became a self fulfilling prophecy through the policies it engendered.

Furthermore, there was the general tendency to allow capital goods in at lower rates of import duty than consumer goods. This meant that as the resulting protection offered to domestic capital goods industries was lower than that offered to domestic consumer goods industries, the avowed strategy of developing capital goods industries was sabotaged by the actual incentives offered through the protective system. More seriously, it meant that the price of capital goods was kept artificially low, which provided an incentive to producers to choose relatively more capital-intensive methods of production at the expense of employing more labour. The foreign trade and import substituting policies have, therefore. aggravated the balance of payments problem, they have transferred incomes from consumers (and the agricultural sector) to profit earning industrial producers. They have led to an uneconomic structure of industry. Most heinously, they have meant less employment than could have been provided with the same given investment resources.

Surely, the time has come to end this great foreign exchange muddle. In devising a solution, it is necessary to bear in mind the only two positive achievements of the trade control system, namely, the maintenance of certain balance between the demand and supply of foreign exchange in aggregate, as well as for each of the heterogenous bundles of tied aid and inconvertible currencies which still form a large part of India's foreign exchange availabilities. This certain balance must continue to be maintained by any alternative scheme if it is to be acceptable. It is not difficult to formulate a scheme which does this, takes account of the objections against devaluations, and yet provides the optimal incentives to import substitution and export promotion without the need for administrative trade controls.

The scheme would first distinguish between exporters of traditional and non-traditional goods. The official exchange rate would remain fixed and exporters of traditional exports would have to surrender their foreign exchange earnings to the Reserve Bank at this rate. All debt servicing payments and other transfers to foreigners denominated in foreign currency would be made at this official exchange rate. Imports on government account, for example food and defence requirements, as well as government payments abroad on account of official travel and business, etc., would also be at the official exchange rate.

Exporters of non-traditional exports would be given foreign exchange certificates (FE) denominate in the appropriate currency, if their earnings are in inconvertible currency, otherwise in sterling/dollars if they are in free foreign exchange. These FE certificates would be sold in a domestic free market to importers who could import any item from a specified list of goods (alternatively, imports of any good from a prohibited list could be disallowed). The FE certificates would have a specified life, within which they have to be used to import the goods desired, or else they would lapse. This is to prevent artificial hoarding of FE certificates for speculative purposes.

Apart from the export proceeds of non-traditional exports, the domestic market for FE certificates would also be fed by government sales of the foreign exchange it receives (from exporters of traditional goods and foreign aid). The

difference between the government's buying rate for foreign exchange (the official exchange rate which applies to traditional exports) and the selling rate (the rate in the free market for FE certificates) constituting a profit for the government, which could be earmarked to subsidise directly any genuine infant industries. Ouantitative restrictions on all goods (except those prohibited from being imported) would be removed. Tariffs would be at the same rate as taxes on domestic production/ consumption of the same commodities. (Domestic production of goods on which there are QR's would also be banned). All import needs, apart from those on government account, but including the import needs of the public sector would be met through purchases of FE certificates on the domestic free market.

These needs would determine the demand for foreign exchange, and the supply of foreign exchange would be determined by the earnings of non-traditional exports and the supplies put on the market by the government. Demand and supply would determine the price of foreign exchange in this domestic free market. As the proportion of traditional exports is much larger than the non-traditional, the government would have great control over the price of foreign exchange in this free market. To reduce the uncertainty importers may face as a result of likely variations in the price of FE certificates over time, forward markets in FE certificates -should be fostered. Again, the government's dominant control over the supply of foreign exchange in this free market would mean that it could counter any destabilising speculation in the forward markets for FE certificates.

The advantages of the system described so far would be immense. At one stroke, the whole irrational administrative allocation of imports would be done away with. The balance between the demand and supply of foreign exchange would be maintained with certainty in the aggregate as well as for each inconvertible bundle of foreign exchange. (The inconvertible FE certificates

would be useful only to import goods from a specified country. If the aid were also tied by commodity, they would also have to be restricted for that currency to specific goods). There would be multiple premia on the tied aid and inconvertible bundles of foreign exchange as there are implicitly at the moment, but with the advance that making them explicit would enable reductions in the overall costs of using tied aid and/or inconvertible currencies for the economy as a whole.

There would be an automatic export subsidy to exporters of nontraditional goods given by the premia on foreign exchange in the FE certificate market. This subsidy would moreover be automatic, would not require any draft on public revenues, and would moreover promote exports in line with India's emerging comparative advantage. Imports would be automatically allocated to those who could make the best use of them at the margin, whilst the higher prices paid for provide imports would automatic incentive for import substitution which would economic and in line with India's comparative advantage.

F inally, as the demand for traditional exports is fairly inelastic, there would be no need to alter the official exchange rate (except in the case of persistent domestic inflation in the prices of these goods relative to world inflation), and hence the costs of devaluation, in terms of the higher rupee costs of debt servicing and other foreign payments denominated in foreign currency, would not arise. The government could honestly say that it was going to maintain the sacred parity of the rupee, without any baneful effects on foreign trade and the pattern of industrialisation.

The third component of the scheme would be a market for foreign exchange supplied by remittances from overseas. In this market (RF) foreign exchange could be bought to be used for importing any good, including those on the banned list for FE certificates, and for foreign travel for pleasure. (Official and business travel and foreign exchange expenses, includ-

ing those on study overseas, being allowed at the official exchange rate). The purpose of the RF market would be to provide an official competitor to the existing black market in foreign exchange which, according to the recent Finance Ministry report, is mainly responsible for the large current leakage of foreign exchange from the country. As this foreign exchange is being lost to the country in any case, and it is doubtful whether the tightening of the administrative screw will by itself prevent much of this leakage, it seems pragmatic to officialise this market, whilst increasing the penalties for those who seek to contravene it. Gradually, with the emergence of a more egalitarian income distribution, hopefully the demand for foreign exchange in this market, and hence the premium on it, will decline, and the market could then be merged with that for FE certificates.

The above scheme, therefore, provides in my view a simple way of substituting a more rational system of foreign exchange allocation than the existing bureaucratic procedures, without any danger of the balance between the demand supply of foreign exchange not being met with complete certainty. It also provides a means for providing enduring rational incentives for import substitution and export promotion in the country. Finally, it will hopefully depoliticise the issue of exchange rate adjustment, as it will not require frequent changes in the official exchange rate.

There are, thus, practical and realistic ways of moving to indirect control of the economy, which is essential for the next stage of our development. The government now undeniably has the power to push through the needed economic reforms, but will it recognise the need for these changes and, even more importantly, have the will to implement them against the understandable opposition of all those groups who have benefitted from bureaucratic capitalism? answer to this question will not effect the outcome of the next few elections, but it will determine history's verdict on Mrs. Gandhi's stewardship.

Books

WAR AND INDIAN ECONOMIC POLICY (1944),

by D. R. Gadgil and N. V. Sovani.

REPORTS OF THE COMMODITY PRICES BOARD

(1948). N. V. Sovani (ed.).

POSTWAR INFLATION IN INDIA-A SURVEY

(1949), by N. V. Sovani.

FOOD CONTROL IN BOMBAY PROVINCE (1958),

by V. S. Patwardhan.

(All publications of the Gokhale Institute of

Politics and Economics, Poona.)

The origin of many of the controls that have been in existence in India in the post-Independence period can be traced to the period of the second world war. India and her economy were brought into the vortex of wartime conditions especially after the entry of Japan into the war in 1941 and what was till then an essentially laissez faire economy had willy nilly to be converted into some kind of a controlled economy. This was done with much reluctance by the bureaucratic circles that governed the country and faced much resistance from the non-official elites—the business circles as well as the representatives of large farmers.

The government of the then province of Bombay, however, took a leading part in understanding the importance of and implementing a rational system of foodgrains control to curb inflationary rises in prices and to ensure equitable distribution of the available supplies. Two individuals who were closely connected with this development were A. D. Gorwala on the official side and D. R. Gadgil on the non-official one. After participating in the development of food administration in the Bombay Province, these two were put on the short lived Commodity Prices Board appointed by the Government of India (interim government of 1946-47).

The approach of this Board was opposed by the trade and business interests whose influence on government policy became more pronounced after Independence. The result was the resignation of these two and the appointment of the Foodgrains Policy Committee (1947) almost clearly for the purpose of carrying out a policy of decontrol. It is well known that this experiment of decontrol proved disastrous and the government was obliged to adopt a policy of re-control shortly thereafter. The damage had, however, been done and the policy was set on the vacillating course which continues to dog the Government

of India in the whole field of economic control right up to now.

In view of this history, the publications of the Gokhale Institute, including the reports of the Commodity Prices Board, would be found to be of special value for students of the subject. Patwardhan's work on the Food Control in Bombay Province traces in detail the history of the building up of the control system, the various problems involved in tackling the economic and administrative problems in this pioneering venture and the manner in which they were solved, thus providing an excellent case study regarding economic administration.

The manner in which a system of partial controls was found to be unworkable and how, by the very logic of the situation, a system of integrated control involving monopoly procurement, rationing and controlled distribution had to be built up would be excellent reading for a student of economic administration. The problems posed regarding the diverse approaches of the surplus and deficit provinces rouse echoes of a much more recent past, or even of the present, and indicate how basic economic problems and attitudes impose compulsions irrespective of the particular political and administrative framework.

The attitudes of different interest groups would also be found interesting. It is noteworthy, for example, that public utilities like the railways, port trusts, municipalities, etc., were in favour of the introduction of rationing, and the only condition suggested by the Provincial Trade Union Congress was that the entire public including organised labour should be taken into confidence in formulating, initiating and administering the rationing scheme, while spokesmen of industry like Purushottamdas Thakurdas and M. A. Master were opposed to the idea. The Indian Merchants Chamber felt that rationing as an antidote was worse than the disease. It is noteworthy that Purushottamdas Thakurdas was later appointed the Chairman of the Foodgrains Policy Committee which was expected to recommend a policy of decontrol.

The analysis of Indian economic policy during the war put forward by Gadgil and Sovani provided, in its first edition, a very timely critique of the lack of realisation on the part of the Government of India of the adverse impact being caused by the inflationary situation in the country, and indicated the importance of establishing a comprehensive system of controls. These views as well as others expressed by economists like Vakil carried influence and, as Gadgil put it in his Foreward to Sovani's Survey of Post War Inflation, 'the twelve months from April 1943 to April 1944 laid the foundation of the regulatory policy of the Government of India for the rest of the period of war.' There was, of course, much improvisation, and much remain-

ed to be done for integrating the various aspects and instruments of control through a comprehensive policy.

Such a policy was not followed by government and the result was that not only did the price level continue to rise—though the rise was somewhat curbed after 1943—but considerable distortions in the price-cost relationships of different commodities and various other abnormalities were permitted to continue and grow. The prices of manufactured products were largely 'negotiated prices', permitting ample margins to producers and distributors. The price changes in 1942-44, because of the defects in the control system, thus 'changed the distribution of income in society in favour of industrialists and the growers of certain agricultural products. The classes to suffer from the change were, as always, the salaried classes, a bulk of wage earners and certain classes of agriculturists'.

The question that was posed in 1946, and which had to be met by the interim government and then by the post-Independence government, was: what was to be done regarding the system of controls that had been built up in the war period? On the one side was the plea put forward by business circles and by important political elements for the abolition of the controls. On the other side there was the plea of administrators, economists and also certain provincial governments like Bombay that decontrol would be disastrous.

It was with a view to help government arrive at a rational policy that the Commodity Prices Board came to be appointed in February, 1947. The Board was short-lived and ceased to exist from October, 1947, when both its members resigned. The most important of its reports was a note on 'Controls and Their Continuance' which attempted to provide a general framework regarding the system of controls. An important point stressed in this note was that not only was the maintenance, strengthening and further rationalisation of the system of economic controls necessary to meet the difficulties of transition from a wartime to a peace-time economy, but the economic development plans which the new government was very much interested in would also require controls for their rachievement.

It was thus pointed out that if location of industry is to be controlled and industrial ventures licensed, 'the next step of controlling the prices and distribution of the products of industry follows logically. Otherwise, government would be doing no more than granting individual capitalists the licence to exploit the internal market and protecting them in their exploitation thereof.'

It was similarly pointed out that the generally accepted approach to stabilisation of agricultural prices implies that 'Government control would have to enter a wide field and determine and fix the acreages under different crops, supervise and maintain minimum standards of husbandry and take a host of other measures'. It was specifically emphasised that in the conditions prevalent in India, where natural resources are distinctly limited in relation to the numbers, the possibility of a rapid increase in national income was not very considerable and therefore, 'any improvement of the standard of

living of the masses that an Indian Government desires to bring about must be brought about by giving an appropriate turn to production and by a controlled distribution of most essential commodities.'

The scrapping of the existing controls on the plea of lack of public support or weakness of the administrative machinery would merely mean an acceptance of inability by government to carry out the development plans which were universally agreed upon as essential.

The difficulty in having partial price control was illustrated by pointing out that the farmers would not quietly submit to the continuance of foodgrains controls while the commodities which the farmer has to buy remain uncontrolled. Similarly, if import and export controls are maintained, these 'create positions of vantage for certain classes of traders and producers. The control of imports limits the extent of competition with goods produced by internal producers which are of the same class as imports. It also gives a specially favourable position to persons who are able to obtain import licences, and there is nothing in the present system of controls to guarantee that the consumer is not penalised or exploited because of the limitations of supply imposed by import controls.'

Through the maintenance of any indirect or partial controls, it was emphasised, particular sections of business are granted special favours and these can only be justified if these sections in their turn are not permitted to exploit the position they enjoy. The special treatment must obviously be reflected in special obligations undertaken by the favourably treated class of producers. If cotton mills or cement factories obtain special coal allocations, the obligations to produce given quantities, and market them in a given manner, must also be imposed on them. Otherwise, the ultimate aim of social policy which can only be to make consumer goods available in sufficient quantities over the entire area would be frustrated and the only result of special allocations would be...to benefit the specially favoured classes.3

The fact that particular groups would advocate only such controls as would benefit them and also that particular regional authorities would also advocate policies which would favour those regions was specifically brought out. 'It is obvious that traders and industrialists and provincial governments are all anxious to improve their bargaining position vis-a-vis others. The only remedy to this state of things is on the one hand a completely integrated set of controls administered from the Centre, working with reasonable efficiency or, on the other hand, complete decontrol including de-control not only over the prices and distribution of consumer goods but over prices and movements of all goods and, over even, possibly imports and exports.'

What was suggested therefore was that a system of integrated controls must be adopted which would cover the cost of living, the cost of production, and allocation of resources. If the then existing controls

were supplemented by some others, all the controls would supplement and reinforce each other and a workable system could be brought into operation. A further point was made that if control was likely to be a continuing feature of future administration, 'its present defects must be taken as a challenge to the politician and the administrator. If the execution of government policy is to depend more and more on government servants, any immediate defects, however grave, constitute a reason not so much for scrapping the agency as for making every effort to improve its performance as early as possible.' At the end, the note urged the importance of formulating a definite policy towards controls, speedily announcing it, and ensuring adherence to it.

The other reports of the Board related to individual commodities and are useful as indicators of the kind of difficulties which existed then—and which continue to exist today—in properly administering economic controls. Lack of cost data was a major difficulty regarding fixation of agricultural prices then. It continues to be so now. The government's refusal to look at the inter-relationship of different prices, whether agricultural or industrial, and the tendency to give ad hoc increases in particular prices, thus giving rise to distortions which led to further demands for increases in prices is brought out in these documents—and this also continues unabated.

Sovani's survey of economic development and policy from 1946 to 1949 gives details about how the decontrol policy was launched, how it had to be reversed within a short time but how it made it crystal-clear that, with all the talk of the amelioration of the conditions of the poor, the voice of business and industry had the maximum influence on government policy.

As Gadgil pointed out in his Foreword, 'The interim Government of 1946-47 was a composite one in which two opposite forces were represented; one in favour of private enterprise and of giving Indian capitalists full opportunities and the other with a bias against the Indian capitalists and therefore tending towards a programme of socialisation and high taxation of business and industry.' The manner in which the Foodgrains Policy Committee was appointed, its recommendations presented and implemented, 'showed the forces that were now (after August 1947) in control and would also control future Indian economic policy.'

It is well known that government policy regarding economic controls has continued in the mould that was set by this early post-Independence phenomenon. Controls were disliked but could not be easily abandoned. Policy makers allowed themselves to be swayed by different interest groups and thus could not adopt a rational and integrated policy. What we see over the last 20 years is the logical outcome of a government which, with laudable objectives, is unclear about its priorities and unwilling to hurt effectively any vested interests. The result is a plethora of controls but none of them properly integrated and rationally administered. Perhaps this is inevitable, given the class composition not only of

the ruling party but of almost all important parties and elements which wield influence over government policy.

Whatever that may be, the publications of the Gokhale Institute regarding this post-war era give us a good account to understand the origins and growth of the control system which, with various modifications, has continued to operate throughout this period.

H. K. Paranjape

POLICY—Final Report, by R. K. Hazari, Planning Commission, Government of India, 1967.

POLICY INQUIRY COMMITTEE—Ministry of Industrial Development, Government of India, 1969.

Industrial licensing as an instrument of the Government's policy of planned development lost much of its appeal when it was found to have in fact contributed to distortion of the country's industrial growth in various ways. To its detractors, this was sufficient reason to abandon it altogether but the Government, which had held high hopes about its efficacy, could not act rashly. They had to be certain about the part the licensing system had actually played in creating the distortions and also whether the fault lay in the system or in its implementation. The two reports reviewed here are products of this inquiry.

The study by Dr. R. K. Hazari was undertaken in 1966 when the author was appointed an honorary consultant in the Planning Commission. Its purpose was twofold: (i) to review the operation of licensing under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act 1951 over the first two plan periods and more closely over the previous six to seven years, including the orderly phasing of licensing with reference to targets of capacity and (ii) to consider and suggest in the light of the stage of economic development where and in what direction modifications may be made in the licensing policy.

The author was also informed of the broad objectives of this policy to help him formulate his proposals in the proper perspective. These objectives were:

(a) regulation of industrial development and canalising of resources according to plan priorities and targets; (b) avoidance of monopoly and prevention of concentration of wealth; (c) protection of small scale industries against undue competition from large scale industries; (d) encouragement of new entrepreneurs to establish industries; (e) distribution of industrial development on a more wide-spread basis in different regions and (f) fostering of technology and economic improvements in industries by ensuring units of economic sizes and adopting modern processes.

Dr. Hazari's study starts off with an analysis of the data on applications, investment in capital equipment and its estimated import component for the period 1959 through June 1966 and reaches some interesting

conclusions on the basis of this analysis. He found that the peak of initial investment intentions, as indicated by investment applied for, was reached in 1960-62; the imported component of investment in capital equipment averaged two-thirds over the period; bulk of approved investment was in the relatively more developed states like Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madras (now Tamilnadu) with the first being 'way up on top'; about 46 per cent of the approved investment was in the three top states, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madras; and Marwaris were 'by far, at the top' in community-wise break-down of the approved investment. The author also found that while domiciled foreign houses accounted for only one per cent of approved investment during 1959-66, the share of international combines was 7 per cent. Also among international combines, those originating in the UK had nearly 4 per cent of approved investment, followed by USA 2 per cent. The share of the Government sector was 16 per cent-much less than that of a single community, Marwaris—in the private sector and that of cooperatives less than 1 per cent with the Western states accounting for one half.

With this preliminary appraisal giving him sufficient indication of the licensing system having ill served its objectives, Dr. Hazari sets out to probe deeper into its working, particularly the extent to which it allowed a few leading industrial houses to appropriate or misappropriate a major share of investment. It is here that he, with his background as an expert in dissecting the ramifications of large industrial houses, uncovers the biggest weakness of the licensing system—its failure to avoid monopoly and prevent concentration of economic power.

Dr. Hazari found that the 28 industrial houses which applied for licences for investment exceeding Rs. 10 crores each during the seven year period 1959-66, accounted for 21 per cent of all applications. They also accounted for 59 per cent of the investment in capital equipment and 38 per cent of its imported component. Twenty one per cent of the approvals too went to these 28 houses. Significantly, while their share in total approved investment declined from 46 per cent in 1959-60 to 39 per cent in 1964-66, the share of the four top among them, namely, the Birlas, J.K., Tatas and Shri Ram groups, increased from 22.4 to 25.6 per cent.

The author also found that these 28 houses had larger investment, as compared with the aggregate, in 'substantial expansion and new articles' and smaller investment in new undertakings. What is more, some houses put in a number of applications for each product and this was 'particularly true of Birla applications'. The Birlas' 'abiding or at least preserving interest' in a tremendous variety of products, 'interest which at times defies several deferments or rejections of applications to attain consummation in approval, interest which seeks to overwhelm the authorities with multiple proposals the moment suitable opportunities offer themselves' the author finds 'unrivalled' and significant. To him this clearly points to the Birlas tending to 'preempt licensable capacity in many industries', According to him, 'enterprise plus imaginative understanding of licensing formalities enables the Birlas to foreclose the market. Astute management turns this process into high and quick returns on investment, which earns foreclosure of economic resources generally, and helps magnify the halo round the House of Birla'.

Having laid bare the distortions in industrial planning, Dr. Hazari sets out the broad outline of his own thinking on the framework of an industrial policy relevant to the Indian economy. The Indian economy. according to him, is 'an amalgam of various elements'. In it although the public sector accounted for 20 per cent of the output of the organised industrial sector, the private sector accounted for the 'bulk of the output, income and savings'. In other words, 'aside from subsistence activity, economic operations are subject to the market mechanism in so far as the allocation and management of economic prices, rates of returns, managerial flexibility, etc., are concerned'. However, nobody can seriously suggest that market mechanism is or can be an exclusive or perfect means for the allocation of resources and maximisation of the growth rate'.

Dr. Hazari's own preference is for a middle course in which 'planning should make the best use of the market mechanism' and at the same time, 'as it steps up the growth of public sector investment and output... it should depend upon fiscal, monetary and foreign exchange controls for manipulation of the market mechanism in the desired directions'. Specifically in industrial planning, it should provide 'a clear advance statement of priorities' and use the other measures rather than a complicated licensing system to achieve the desired results. The deficiencies of the industrial licensing policy consisted precisely in its neglect of the first task and preoccupation with an unworkable licensing system.

Having identified the deficiencies of the licensing policy, Dr. Hazari outlines his plan of action. Priorities in industrial planning, in his view, must be clearly defined. Having done this, a few top priority areas should be selected for planning in depth, 'leaving the rest of the economy to look after itself within a framework of indicative targets and drastically restricted availability of foreign exchange'. Further, certain areas should be reserved for small units and certain traditional industrial activities should be closed to the 10 or 15 largest industrial houses and their associates because there is no substance in the belief that the largest houses are the most efficient or most dependable for growth'.

Dr. Hazari's report does not thus call for a scrapping of the licensing system which it has clearly found to have not served any of the objectives of the Government's industrial policy. All it advises is a reform of the system to make it a more effective and less cumbersome instrument of the national policy. Its merit lies in demolishing the myth that what the licensing policy had been promoting was a non-monopolistic industrial sector; it was on the other hand, helping to strengthen monopoly and concentration.

The Industrial Licensing Policy Inquiry Committee studies this and related aspects of the industrial policy in much greater depth. It draws heavily on Dr. Hazari's report and also on the report of the Monopolies Inquiry Commission set up in 1964 'to enquire into the existence and effect of concentration of economic power in private hands'. The provocation for all these studies, as the Committee has pointed out in the introduction to its report, was provided by the Mahalanobis Committee's conclusion that the working of the planned economy had contributed to the growth of big companies in Indian industry and also that 'the growth of the private sector in industry, and especially of the big companies has been facilitated by the financial assistance rendered by public insti-tutions like the Industrial Finance Corporation (IFC), the National Industrial Development Corporation etc.'. The Monopolies Commission had also underscored this distortion in industrial development and added that 'big business was at an advantage in securing the licences for starting new industries or for expanding the existing capacity'. It was also convinced that 'the system of controls in the shape of industrial licensing, however necessary from other points of view, has restricted the freedom of entry into industry and so helped to produce concentration'.

These findings of two high-powered Committees, reinforced by Dr. Hazari's conclusion that the large business groups enjoyed a higher ratio of approvals in licensing applications as compared to others, necessitated an exhaustive wide ranging study to provide a set of guidelines for modifying the policy for the future. The Industrial Licensing Policy Inquiry Committee was set up in response to this need.

The Committee's terms of reference were broadly the same as were the subject matter of Dr. Hazari's study. They were, however, more sharply edged out in so far as the pre-emption of capacity by larger industrial houses was concerned. Other important subjects referred to the Committee were the progress, or lack of it, in regional dispersal of industries, the growth of small scale and medium industries, the policy of import substitution and the extent to which 'the policies followed by specialised financial institutions, such as the Industrial Finance Corporation and the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India, in advancing loans to industries have resulted in any undue preference being given to the larger industrial houses'. The Committee decided to view all of its terms of reference in such a way that its examination of them could be 'integrated into a study in depth of the regulation and financing of the private sector'.

The Committee's main report consists of eight chapters including one on 'introduction and background'. The other seven chapters deal with the concept of large industrial houses; review of the development of the industrial licensing system and the manner in which it has evolved and functioned; large houses and industrial licensing, implementation and pre-emption; policy objectives and licensing; financial assistance by various specialised financial institution and overall conclusions and recommendations. There are also a number of appendices relating to the

statistical and other data relevant to the Committee's main report.

The Committee has examined at great length the various criteria prescribed by Dr. Hazari and the Monopolies Inquiry Commission for defining a large industrial house. It reached the conclusion that the concept should be treated as broadly similar to the concept of 'business group' as defined by the Monopolies Commission, that is to say, 'ascertain the substance of the control and not adhering to the deeming provisions about the same management or the same group as in the Companies Act.' In other words, 'the House should include all those business concerns over which a common authority holds sway' regardless of their separate legal entities or extent of equity participation by the controlling group.

On this basis, the Committee identified 75 houses with assets exceeding Rs. five crores as 'large industrial houses' and the top 20 among them, each with total assets exceeding Rs. 35 crores, as 'larger industrial houses'. It also considered it necessary to pay attention to foreign-controlled companies, both Indian subsidiaries of foreign companies and Indian branches of foreign companies, even those with assets of less than Rs. 5 crores, because of their capacity 'to exert influence in matters like obtaining licences on the strength of their international stature'. For the same reason, it considered it necessary to examine the position of large independent companies in respect of licensing and related aspects of the Government policy.

After defining the concept of large and larger industrial houses and identifying them, the Committee set out to examine the licensing system as it had evolved over the years, and especially after the framing of the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956. Its exhaustive probe led it to the conclusion that the system, even when it was geared to serving a definite objective, like development and regulation of important industries 'the activities of which affect the country as a whole', was not expected to achieve the objective all by itself. It was to be used 'in combination with various other instruments at the Government's disposal' to yield the desired results.

Unfortunately, though the need to use these other instruments 'in a well-designed combination' was realised even at the time of the Plan, 'adequate operational methods for such coordinated use of these instruments were never devised'. A case in point is the working of the financial institutions which lent voluminous resources to the large industrial houses because of this inadequate coordination. Similarly, while the general objective of preventing monopolistic tendencies and concentration of economic power was frequently emphasised, 'no specific instruction was given that the licensing authorities should keep this purpose in view'.

As a result, licensing, especially in the earlier years, was guided 'more by technical than by economic, leave alone social considerations'. Even when the Monopolies Commission had laid bare the consequences of

this neglect, no clear directions were issued to the licensing authorities and the financial institutions on how they should treat applications from the large houses.

Similarly, even though the objective of planned development had been accepted as 'relevant for the licensing system right from the beginning, the necessary groundwork for it in the form of a properly worked out industry plan was not undertaken.' As a result, it failed to prevent the growth of capacity in less essential industries and promote it in the more essential ones. This was also true of the licensing authorities' approach to import substitution which in many cases resulted in creation of capacities in less essential industries while the more essential industries were starved of resources. Likewise, 'foreign collaboration agreements, including foreign equity participation, were permitted in non-essential areas in repetitive ways'.

As regards regional dispersal, the Committee did not find the licensing system capable of playing a major role, mainly because it could not discriminate between one state and another, 'especially as there was no agreed list of industrially advanced and backward states or regions'. Similarly, it could encourage the growth of small and medium industries only in areas 'where reservations for certain products or processes could be successfully enforced at an appropriate stage of the development of the concerned industries, and these were accompanied by supporting measures such as technical, financial and marketing assistance'.

As a result of these deficiencies, the licensing system failed to prevent industrial growth in undesirable lines. On the other hand, it helped in the growth of concentration by allowing a few concerns, belonging to the large industrial sector to appropriate a disproportionate share in the newly licensed capacity and even among them letting the larger houses run away with the maximum benefit. However, the Committee does not favour abandoning the system because of these faults. Apart from the fact that it can be only as effective as the authorities can make it by coordinating it with other economic and fiscal policies, it is needed to regulate industrial growth on proper lines. All that is needed is to give it a proper focus and sharpen its edges at proper places.

The Committee does not, however, expect licensing to have anything more than a negative role in this respect. It can be used for permitting or refusing a particular scheme or project and not necessarily for its promotion. Even in this limited sphere, its success depends upon the authorities preparing detailed industrial plans. Since even 'with all the possible improvements in the machinery for detailed industrial planning...it is not likely that such detailed and fully coordinated plans will be formulated in respect of all industries', the Committee wants attention to be concentrated on basic, strategic and critical sectors of economic development.

A significant proportion of projects in these, the 'core' sectors, would, of necessity, be developed in

the public sector but quite a few of them would have to be developed in the private sector and licensing for them should be based on detailed planning. The Committee wants the interest of the larger industrial houses to be confined to these sectors. It wants assistance to be given to them by the state financial institutions to be convertible into equity capital. (The 'joint sector', resulting from such convertibility, is the Committee's unique contribution to industrial financing). At the other end of the spectrum the Committee favours reservation of a large number of industries for the small scale sector. For all other industries to be grouped in the 'middle sector', it wants licensing to be confined to preventing the entry of the large industrial houses.

The Committee has also made a detailed study of various procedural and other issues connected with licensing to make it more purposeful and effective in regulating industrial development.

The Committee has worked out an integrated plan covering every facet of industrial planning, from reorientation and reorganisation of public financial institutions and the development of the concept of the 'joint sector' to strengthening and streamlining of the licensing machinery. Its four volumes of appendices provide detailed statistical and factual information on the various subjects discussed by it.

The Committee's proposals are by no means radical in the sense that they are not aimed at changing the existing economic relations. But they certainly have the merit of saving licensing from becoming an instrument for strengthening these relations.

Satya Narain

INDUSTRY AND TRADE IN SOME DEVELOPING

COUNTRIES, by Ian Little, Tibor Scitovsky, Maurice Scott. An OECD publication.

A close examination of the industrialization experiences of seven developing countries as also of various theoretical arguments has led the authors to the conclusion that the importance given to import substitution policies in these countries is misplaced; so is the reliance on administrative controls that tamper with the price mechanism. Their recommendations naturally assume the form of a reversal of many fundamental aspects of this strategy of development. To complete the logic, potential benefits of their alternative pattern of industrialization are presented. The countries are Argentine, Brazil, Mexico, India, Pakistan, Taiwan and the Philippines.

The experience of these countries during the depression of the 30s and the second world war only underscored their desire for self sufficiency. Rapid industrialisation was the answer and the main policy tool employed was import restrictions. The level of protection was generally very high, with extreme variation in the effective rates among different countries and different industry groups within each country. The argument was that this protective wall would encourage investment in industry, provide the

savings necessary for industrialization and guarantee a market to domestic industry. The corresponding overvalued currency was accepted as a permanent feature for historical, political and economic reasons.

Actual events, however, belied these hopes and had harmful side effects. (1) There was an excessive shift of resources—labour and capital—out of agriculture and into industry as a result of terms-of-trade unfavourable to agriculture. Increase in urban as well as total unemployment and misallocation of capital gave disturbing proof of this. (2) A strong bias against exporting manufacturers followed inevitably from the rise in price of inputs and currency overvaluation. (3) The policy of import substitution did not even achieve its objective of easing the foreign exchange situation.

The other attack is on the use of administrative controls that typically delay the execution of routine decisions so that the capital-output ratio increases on account of excessive inventories and under utilization of capacity. The red tape slows down capital formation.

Their alternative remedial strategy has three aspects. (1) Greater reliance is placed on the price mechanism and the profit motive with government ensuring that market prices correspond with social priorities. However, their suggestion that world prices be taken as a measure of social costs and benefits is unconvincing in its logic; nor do they suggest how non-traded inputs and labour be valued. (2) Encouragement to industry is ensured by a suitable fiscal structure and specifically with an average labour subsidy of 5-10 per cent of value added. However, the associated problems of administration deserve more comprehensive treatment. (3) Balance-of-payments equilibrium is ensured chiefly through alterations in the exchange rate. But what of destabilizing speculative tendencies?

To convince the reader that an export promotion drive is likely to pay rich dividends, the authors have carried out two interesting exercises. The first presents prima facie evidence that countries do have control over export earnings. The second assumes a hypothetical increase in export earnings of each country—subject to supply and demand limitations—to show that the corresponding share of the world market required to be captured is small. However, the conclusion has limited value since actual constraints might be considerably stronger and different in nature. The authors, while admitting that export promotion measures in many cases have met with only limited success, offer the apology that external circumstances can be held responsible.

On the other hand, one could argue that a superior policy should provide a better buff against unfavourable random occurrences. All this really calls into question the usefulness of examining empirical evidence in a random fashion, and highlights difficulties of interpretation when controlled experiments are impossible.

The chapter, 'Action by Developed Countries' urges prosperous countries to free their trade with

developing countries on the plea that the resulting unemployment of wage-earners is likely to be small, that profit-earners can be suitably compensated and that the necessary redeployment of resources can be made beneficial to the economy. There are, however, few guidelines in the book about how the promised mutual benefits will, or can, accrue to the developed countries, and if there is one thing that is manifestly clear by now, it is that the international games of aid and trade are not played on the principles of charity and moral responsibility. Presenting the developing countries of the world in opposition to the developed is also to ignore an international reality which is being increasingly characterized by polarisation and formation of political power-groups made up of both developed and less developed countries.

The book's basic reasoning is sound—that it is naive to ignore opportunities presented by world trade by attempting to build up industry through catering only to a limited domestic market. An import substitution policy admittedly has its limitations, but a policy of export promotion is no less likely to run into bottlenecks. What can be more revealing than the fact that the current UNCTAD Conference in Santiago, after 45 days of deliberation, has only been successful in recommending that tourism in developing countries should be encouraged! Nor can their suggestions about managing the domestic economy be easily accepted.

That some urgent rethinking on the subject (at least in India) is imperative cannot be over-emphasized. The recent performance of industry in India in the last two years is cause enough for worry—its rate of growth in 1971 is estimated at 3.5% compared with 4.8% in 1970 and 7.1% in 1969. The drive towards rapid industrial growth has been meandering and zigzagging through a maze of subsidiary and diversionary policies, some of which such as industrial licensing procedures, anti-monopoly acts and regional pulls of dubious economic validity have turned the terrain into a wonderland of obstacles. The problem, clearly, is not one of objectives but of devising programmes consistent with them.

It is the curious phenomenon of the 'mixed economy' which has in-built contradictions. By and large, market prices are permitted to perform their allocative role but a half-commitment to an ideology inspires a partial and ad-hoc tampering, but without rational calculation. The authors suggest almost complete reliance on private initiative; that is not the only alternative. Two things must be recognised. One, maximisation of growth cannot be the sole objective of government, distributive justice is important too. Two, the experience of western economies can hardly be transplanted on to the currently underdeveloped ones; there is little doubt that, in the struggling Third World, there is no alternative to a massive and catalytic effort by the State.





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urther reading

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Communication

Perhaps it was a fate of irony that the day I read in the newspapers that the Special Magistrate (CBI cases) took cognizance of the offences against Anandmurti and his seven followers for their trial in the court of law on the charges of criminal conspiracy, murdering six Anand Marg defectors and concealing their bodies to screen the offence, I also came through the May issue of Seminar which carried a letter defending (in vain) the dangerous designs of Anand Marg and its founder—Baba Anandmurtijee. The letterwriter, some Mr. A. S. Pilgrim, who claims to be associated with the Young Men's Spiritual Association, was 'shocked and deeply pained' to read my article on Anand Marg (Seminar, March 1972) which seemed to him 'scandalous material gleaned from the yellow press.' Well, sir, I am neither shocked nor pained since I know that there are enough persons in this semi-feudal country who could go to any length to defend any Tom, Dick or Harry who claim to be the Tarak Brahma, i.e. Supreme God. In fact it is the existence of such a class of people which is the raison d'être of secret societies in India.

The letter-writer says that I am 'starkly ignorant' about Anand Marg. Well, sir, I am willing to learn from him on the subject, provided he gives a touch of objectivity in his analysis which was lacking in his letter—so full of sky-high praises and high-sounding words.

A. S. Pilgrim denies the liquidation of Anand

Marg, even when all the top important members have either defected from the organisation or are in jail custody. The downfall has gone to the length of shutting down its political shop—the Proutist Block of India— by its General Secretary, Mr. S. R. Sahu. No! please don't say that the PBI has nothing to do with the Marg. Hearing the news that Mr Sahu has decided to rejoin the Congress, the Public Relations Secretary of the Anand Marg Pracharak Sangha (mind not the PBI) came with a statement regretting the step!

I've devoted enough time and energy to have a peep inside the Anand Marg, and I am well aware of their sort of 'humanism'.

I do not think that the Anand Marg is a spiritual organisation, though it claims to be one. Spirituality and demonstration of magical or so-called spiritual powers are poles assunder. What the former does, can be better explained by our young man from the Spiritual Association. The latter, however, degrades the exhibitor who aims at fame, luxury and riches and trades in the credulity of persons in distress due to certain reverses or disease or ambition. The number of such exhibitors, unfortunately, has been on the increase in recent years. The fact is that the Anand Marg is (or was) one of the several forms of 'under-cover political activities', as Seminar put it.

N. K. Singh Patna.

Moulders of men:

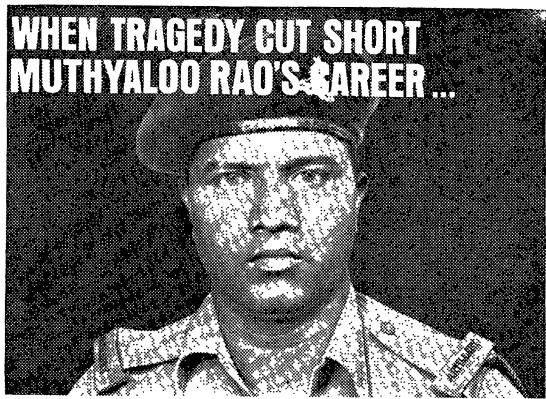


the men behind the machines, at the desks and drawing boards. The men who lead and manage at Indian Oxygen. Even in the age of machines, in the

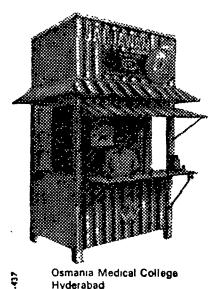
> Indian industry needs INDIAN OXYGEN

final analysis it is man who moves and decides. IOL is aware of this. That is why IQL takes pains to select the right man. That is why in IOL the accent is on training, on moulding, on developing men at all levels from the workman to the top management. Deeply committed to professionalism in all fields, IOL is training and developing a new breed of managers and technologists to cope with the current and future needs of Indian industry.

10C-199



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We gave him a fully equipped Jai Jawan Stall, outside the Osmania Medical College, Hyderabad. Today, with a variety of wares in his stall 'Businessman' Rao faces the future with a confident smile. And everyone who buys from him says his own little "thank you" to the brave man who served his country so well.

It all began over five years ago when our first Jai Jawan Stall was inaugurated in Poona. Since then, more have been set up in various States of the country, and still more are planned. But it's a massive problem to help these many thousands of ex-servicemen and it can only be solved if other organisations join in with similar ventures. To let India's brave warriors know that they are not forgotten once their active service is over.

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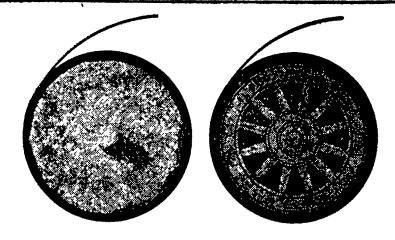


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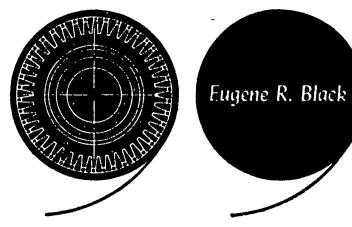
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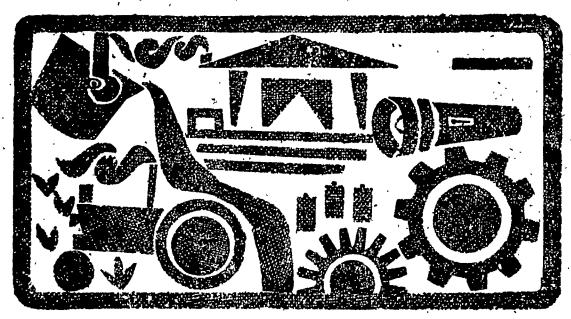


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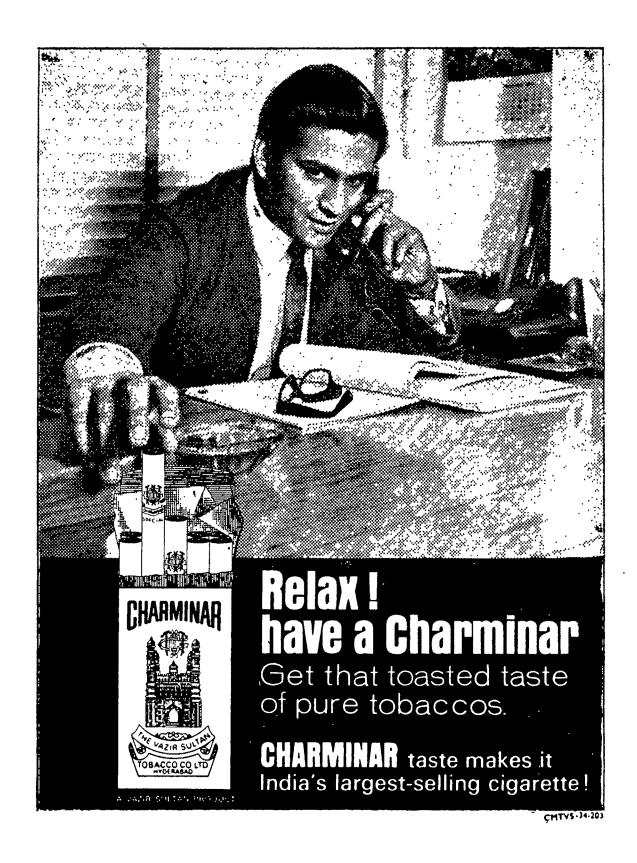
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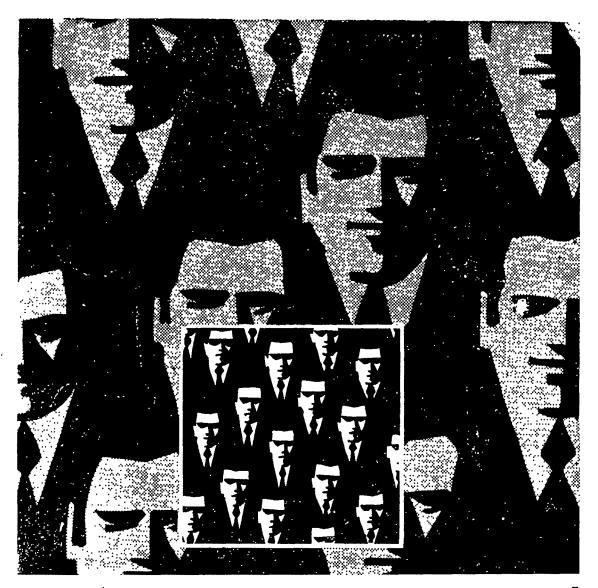
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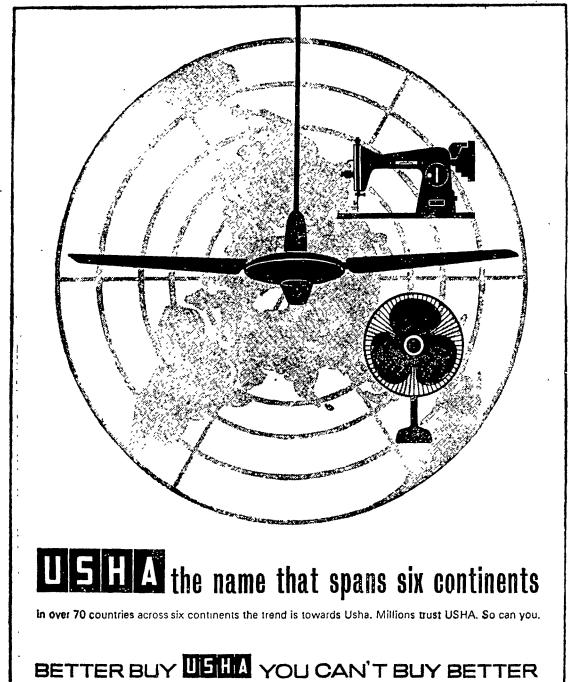
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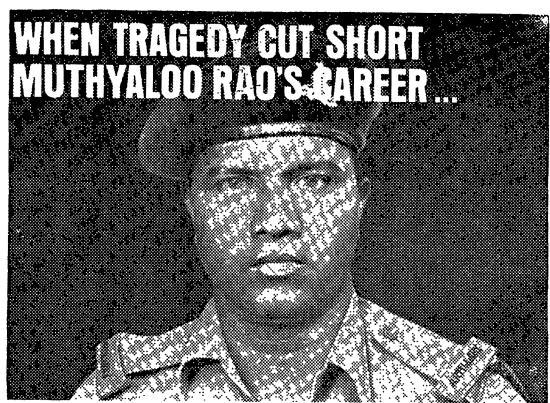
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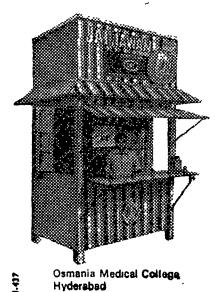
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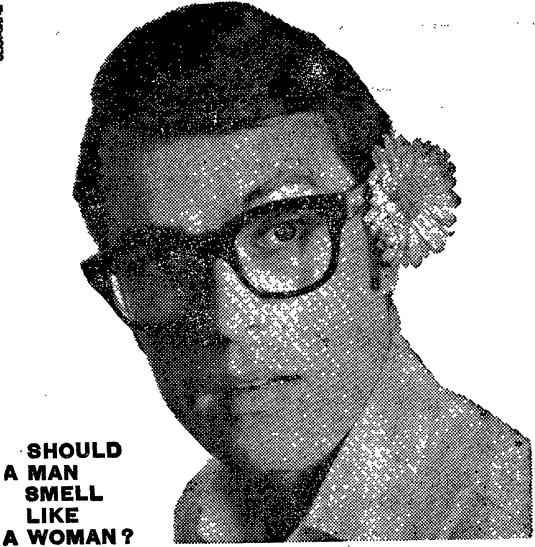
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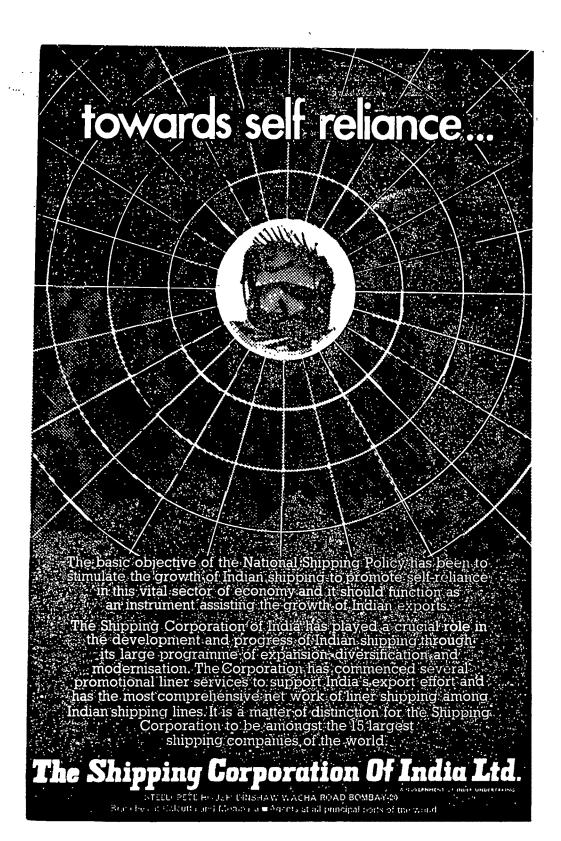


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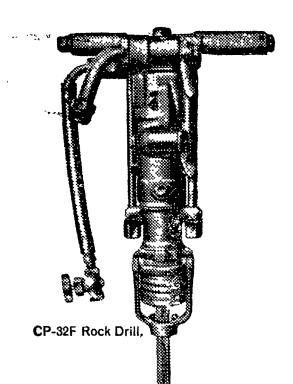
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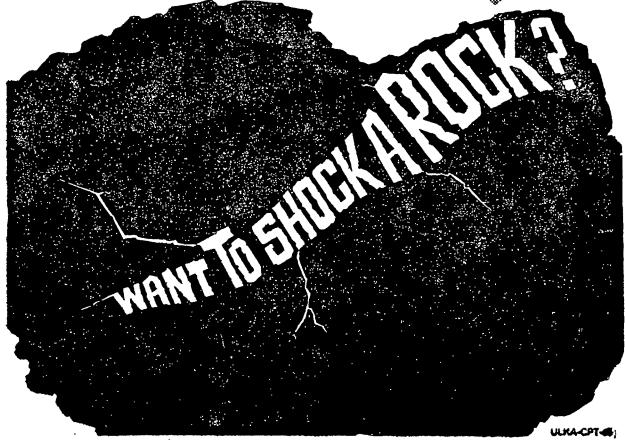
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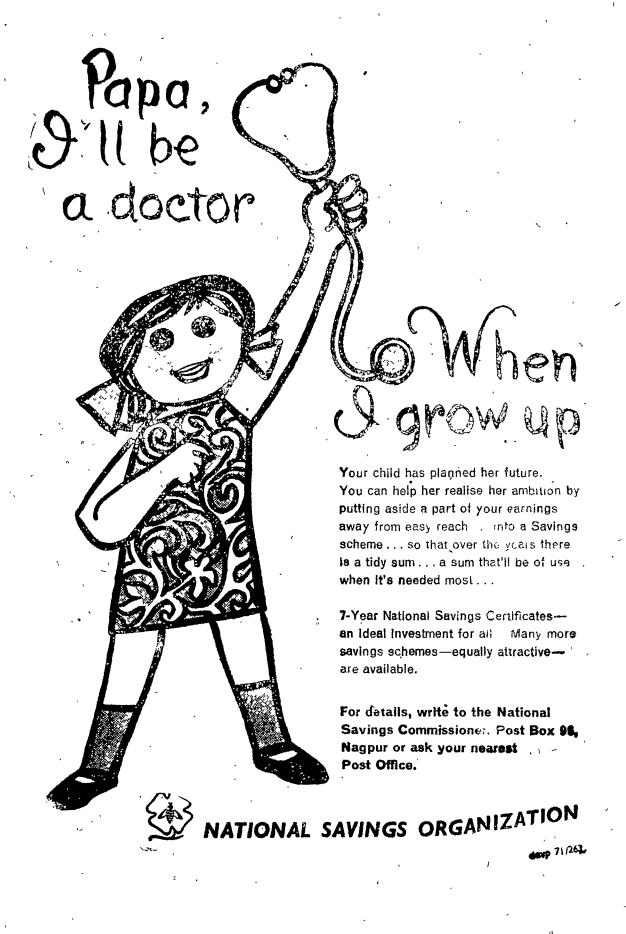
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a symposium on the new compulsions behind our foreign policy

symposium participants

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COVER
Designed by Dillp Chowdhury

The problem

THE rise of a strong political leader in Mrs. Gandhi, the relatively comfortable food position, the easy and convincing military victory over Pakistan and the establishment of a friendly and independent Bangladesh have combined to create the impression, both in India and abroad, that this country is now ready to play a major role in Asia as a whole. But it is just not equipped to do so outside its immediate neighbourhood in South Asia. The two propositions should not be confused. India can, given a chance, contribute to the peace and stability of South Asia. But the continent is an altogether different whole matter.

The reasons for this assessment should be fairly obvious. In spite of the green revolution on a limited scale, the Indian economy is not, and is not likely to become, in the present decade and perhaps beyond, strong enough to sustain an ambitious foreign policy. Industry has hardly grown in recent years and it remains doubtful whether the country has either the will or the capacity to dispense with foreign aid. Its defence forces are obviously well-trained. But the air force and the navy cannot be said to be well-equipped. It can expand both to some extent but not much. It just does not have the resources.

Mrs. Gandhi's India is, of course, not comparable to Sukarno's Indonesia, Nkrumah's

Ghana and Nasser's Egypt. But illusions of grandeur can distort its priorities and put it on a dangerous course. In order to avoid the risk, it should be recognised that even the recent war was not so much a case of India's victory as of Pakistan's collapse and that it will be a long time before the country's size and potentialities come fully into play.

Personally, I am doubtful whether India has much to gain by involving itself deeply in the affairs of South-East and West Asia. But even if the desirability of it is conceded, India does not possess the resources to make its influence felt, except perhaps in a symbolic kind of way as in the case of its decision to upgrade its mission in Hanoi to the ambassadorial level.

So far as I can see, the South-East Asian scene is likely to be dominated by a competition between the United States, Japan, China and possibly the Soviet Union, although it remains to be seen whether, despite its all-out support to North Viet Nam, Moscow can acquire much of a leverage in the region on a long term basis.

The situation in South-East Asia just now appears to be favourable to the Soviet Union because President Nixon's visit to Peking has upset the allies of both. Thailand, for instance, is as uncertain about the future as North Viet Nam. But, it does not follow that countries of the region would look for support to Moscow

against an allegedly expansionist China and that, as Russia's ally, India can carve a place for itself in the region. On the contrary, it appears more likely that as the shock of the expected Sino-U.S. detente wears off, governments concerned will feel sufficiently reassured not to wish to bring another super power into their affairs. This trend is likely to be strengthened if the Chinese do not breathe down the necks of noncommunist regimes which may otherwise be more than auxious to maintain normal relations with them.

This may well turn out to be as true of Hanoi as of others. It is distrustful of China because it fears that the latter may make a deal with the United States on the future of Indochina behind its back. It is also dependent on the Soviet Union for sophisticated weapons. But, once the U.S. forces withdraw, it may not wish to alienate its powerful northern neighbour by leaning too heavily towards Moscow irrespective of whether or not Peking genuinely respects its dominant position in Indochina.

It may be premature to say that the United States and China have agreed on the need to stabilise the situation in South-East Asia so that the Soviet Union does not get an opportunity to move in. But the trend in that direction is quite evident. It also seems to be a reasonable inference that China is prepared to jettison its call for 'wars of national liberation'

in countries which are ruled by pro-U.S. regimes in order to contain Soviet influence.

Japan is obviously destined to influence considerably the course of developments in this part of the world. It feels let down by the United States which is now behaving as if the containment of Japan's economic power has become the first objective of its policy in the region and as if it is prepared to co-operate with China for achieving this objective. Tokyo has already begun to assert its independence. It has established full diplomatic relations with Outer Mongolia and sent delegations to Pyongyong, and Hanoi. It can be taken for granted that Japan will increasingly assert its independence of America and step up its economic and other contact with Russia. But, there is little evidence to suggest that it will repudiate the alliance with Washington, acquire nuclear weapons and try to frustrate a possible Sino-U.S. arrangement. The Japanese are an emotional people and no one can be sure how they will react. But, in any assessment, the pull of trade with America and with China should not be minimised. My own view is that Tokyo will by and large be accommodated in a Sino-U.S. scheme if the two powers are able to work out one.

As for West Asia, one must be very naive to believe that the Arabs have much regard and goodwill for India. Their pro-Pakistan attitude

during and even after the successful culmination of Bangladesh's struggle for freedom can leave little room for illusion on this score. The fact of the matter is that however much India may protest its secularism, Arab countries as a rule regard it as a Hindu nation. The position was somewhat different during the Nasser era. But that is an old story.

Moreover, so long as the Arab-Israel disputes are not resolved—there is no prospect of it at all—the West Asian scene will be dominated by the Russo-U.S. rivalry on the one hand and uncertainty regarding the Soviet position on the other. Moscow remains vulnerable despite its colossal investment in the Arab world in the form of military hardware and economic assistance because of the general antipathy towards communism and the appeal of the West

India has, of course, emerged as the strongest power in South Asia. Since this country commanded three-fourths of the sub-continent's resources in men and material even when Bangladesh and the present Pakistan were one country, this is by itself not much of an achievement. But, in the context of the military debacle in the border war with China in 1962 and the stalemate in the war with Pakistan in 1965, it is. The question, however, is: where then do we go from here?

One view is summed up by a correspondent of The Economist, London. in the journal's issue of February 26, 1972: The article says: India would like to see is a recreation of Britain's Asian empire, minus, of course, the original colonial power. This process has already begun, some say, with the birth of a Bangladesh intimately linked with India. Once India and Pakistan arrive at their new relationship. India will be able to act as a bridge between Pakistan and its severed half. The next step in the scenario would be for Ceylon and Burma to be drawn into a kind of regional association. This might take the form of a common market. But more important for India than any formal structure is that the sub-continent should begin to think of itself as a regional unit, free of interference from any of the great powers, including the Soviet Union.'

But this only begs the question. How is it to be done? The problem has two facets—whether external powers, specially the United States and China, will accept such an arrangement and whether the smaller countries in the region will co-operate with India in excluding undue foreign influence and working out a harmonious relationship between peoples who have so much in common. No one can in all honesty answer either of these questions in the affirmative.

As for the first, both Washington and Peking accuse India of aggression against Pakistan and

and collusion with the Soviet Union. They are not concerned with the fact that India had to act if the 10 million refugees had to go back. They also disregard the point that India in all probability would not have concluded the treaty with the Soviet Union if President Nixon had not continued to provide military supplies to Islamabad after the Pakistan army's crackdown in Bangladesh on March 25, 1971, if Chou En-lai had not come out on the side of General Yahya Khan in his confrontation with the people of East Bengal on the one hand, and with India on the other, and if Kissinger's secret visit to Peking last July had not created the feeling of Sino-U.S. collusion in New Delhi.

This disregard for India's vital interests is not a matter of academic interest because at least just now it appears that America and China do not allow India to occupy its legitimate place in South Asia and they will go to great lengths to prevent it from doing so. It may be somewhat rash to say that the region has become a major focal point of two cold wars between America and Russia on the one hand and Russia and China on the other. But, clearly, the U.S. and Chinese attitudes do not augur well for peace and stability here.

If Washington and Peking were interested only in preventing the rise of Russia as the dominant power in the area at their cost, they could, after the liberation of Bangladesh at least, pursue the alternative policy of accepting India's present status and thereby encouraging it to preserve and strengthen its policy of non-alignment. But, so far they have not done so and there is no indication that they intend to do so in the near future. The logic of events may force them to do so in the long run. But, in the meantime, they would have created lots of problems for India.

As for the second aspect of the problem of insulating the region from undue external interference, it is self-evident that the task of managing relations with the two countries in the sub-continent is by itself far more challenging than that of dealing with one Pakistan as in the past. With the anticipated level of external intervention, it can be truly formidable. Add to it the problems of persuading the highly sensitive Nepalese and Ceylonese to co-operate and you have some idea of the magnitude of the task. All in all, this country's preoccupation with its immediate neighbours may increase rather than decrease as a result of recent events. If that is so, it cannot be said that its interest in playing and its capacity to play a significant role in other parts of Asia will increase. In my view, it is sheer fantasy for anyone to believe that Bangladesh can facilitate our entry into South-East Asia.

As part of Pakistan, East Bengal was dormant in military, political and economic terms. If therefore it did not provide an opportunity for meaningful relations, it also posed no problem to this country. It could easily be ignored at the time of the war with Pakistan in 1965. Having now come into its own as an independent entity, it is bound to produce opportunities as well as challenges. It will make demands on India and at the same time seek the fullest expression for its personality. It will almost certainly seek and establish, so far as possible, good relations with all major powers irrespective of their attitude towards India.

As for Pakistan, it faces enormous problems. Immediately, it has to secure the return of its prisoners of war from India, get its territories vacated and negotiate agreements with Bangladesh on the questions of debt sharing and exchange of population. It has also to produce viable political institutions and satisfy the aspirations of linguistic and cultural minorities. Above all, it has to resolve the problem of identity because it can no longer claim to be the homeland of the Muslims of the subcontinent. But, left to its own devices and resources, it could have worked out a stable relationship with India. In the given situation where it can expect U.S. and Chinese support and assistance, however, it is open to question whether it will move in that direction.

Thus, it seems that India is not about to get over the first and most important foreign policy problem of having a friendly, co-operative and stable neighbour in Pakistan. And however much we may wish otherwise, we will remain handicapped in our dealings with the rest of the world so long as this necessary pre-condition is not met.

In a deep, fundamental sense, the main tasks of India's foreign policy were defined in the very process of its birth as an independent nation. These were to eliminate excessive foreign intervention in the affairs of the sub-continent and establish co-operation with Pakistan so that the twin requirements of preserving the essential unity of the sub-continent and fulfilling the Muslim community's search for autonomy could be met. No one can claim that these goals have been achieved with the break-up of Pakistan and the establishment of an independent Bangladesh. What then should India do?

One view which I have argued through the columns of *The Times of India* can be that India should try to see to it that at least one, if not both, of the great powers which sided with Pakistan in the recent conflict—the United States and China—should adopt a more evenhanded approach, that Washington may prove more amenable than Peking and that this country should take steps to make it clear that its

relations with the Soviet Union are purely bilateral and that it has no desire or intention to become a party to a wider anti-U.S. and anti-Chinese arrangement which Moscow may have in view.

But, there is another view which is difficult to dismiss out of hand. It is that the Nixon-Kissinger team wants to restore America's dominant position in the region, that it regards India's own assertive self-confidence as much a threat to its interests as Russia's alleged ambitions and New Delhi's treaty relations with Moscow, that it still believes that Pakistan can play a useful role to balance India on the one hand and help build an anti-Soviet Islamic grouping on the other.

So far as China is concerned, much of the earlier optimism regarding the possibility of improved relations with it has disappeared and the consensus in India now is that the country has to be prepared for difficulties from that quarter for a fairly long period. But since China's independent capacity to harm this country is limited, specially in the context of the Indo-Soviet treaty, the problem is manageable. U.S. policy must therefore be a matter of greater concern for New Delhi.

For whatever it is worth, my personal view is that the United States is caught up with the painful problems of transition. The era when it hoped and sought to dominate the noncommunist world has by and large ended with its failure to win the war in Viet Nam. President Nixon's visit to Peking is by itself a strong enough confirmation of this point. But the cold war psychology is still alive and it finds expression in such things as the instinctive distrust of India and the preference for Pakistan. It is notable in this connection that President Nixon himself does not tire of proclaiming that the United States remains the world's greatest power.

On this reckoning, while the United States has no choice but to adjust itself to new realities in the world and accept that its power has even more severe limitations than it has realised so far, the process will of necessity be painful and prolonged. The Soviet Union can facilitate it and so can India, though in a much more limited sense. Moscow's response is its business. So far as New Delhi is concerned, it may not be a bad idea if it reassures Washington that it is not motivated by anti-U.S. bias.

In the period of flux ahead, India has obviously to be vigilant. It has to keep the powder dry lest it is taken by surprise. But it has also to be modest and resilient. Never before has this country faced such complicated and contradictory problems and challenges as it does now and it will ill serve its interests to be loudmouthed and rigid.

A game of patience

S. GOPAL

THE poser article is reminiscent of Kipling's Recessional, pointing out, lest we forget, that we should not lose our heads because of the military victory, that it wasn't such a great military victory after all, and that it has created many new problems and dimensions. It is a dolorous, depressing account, playing up the difficulties and playing down the assets. This is, of course, all to the good; one can never have too much of humility and realism. But a picture all in black and grey is also a misrepresentation. To under-rate our opportunities is as dangerous and confusing as to over-rate our achievement and capacity.

There is no doubt that whatever the luck and advantages we had, and however little we might be thought to have deserved it, the military campaign of December 1971 was a resounding success. It was exactly the reverse of the Chinese aggression of 1962; then our setback reverberated into an inglorious defeat much greater than the military facts warranted; and on this occasion the clap of triumph has been much louder than the victory on the ground. And this has had its effect on the nation's morale.

Ten years ago we went into a tail-spin which showed a weakness of soul rather than of strength; today we hold our heads high in a manner which, even if not warranted, is certainly wholesome. And it is not only Indians who have been impressed by this success of our arms. As among individuals, so among nations, respect is earned to the same extent that one respects oneself. If there is a new wind blowing in Nepal, and all eyes there are not turned to the north in fear and to the south with contempt, it is not the result solely of Mahendra's death. In Ceylon, too, can be discerned the return to sound health of relations with India.

In fact, the events of 1971 have restored in South Asia the normal balance which had been lacking ever since 1947. The creation by the British of the monstrosity of Pakistan, and the arming of her by the United States to an extent that she could be a military aberration and a threat to India, pulled the whole area out of focus. twentyfive years we had the ridiculous situation of India being equated with Pakistan, of our foreign policy being heavily coloured by the Kashmir issue, of every country hostile to us finding a ready-made ally. Now, at last, the imperialist and neo-colonialist distortions have been set right. We have, of course, new problems. Relations with Bangladesh are obviously going to require a sureness as well as a delicacy of touch which will demand all our care and attention. But this is a problem born of a natural context and not of a setting imposed by others in their own interests.

The immediate problem, however, is relations with truncated This again is a new Pakistan. problem which has to be looked at without any of the confusing overtones of the past. Nothing has been more astonishing in recent months than the steady stream of Indian journalists queueing up to meet President Bhutto as if he were a panda in a zoo and coming back with irrelevant tit-bits. It would be more worthwhile for them and for their readers if they stayed at home and did their homework.

We would be better equipped to handle the problem as it now stands if we grasp firmly its basic outlines. For the first time since 1954, Pakistan is no longer a military threat either by herself or even in alliance with any other power. Not only need we no longer bother about a second front on the east; with a large number of her trained soldiers as prisoners in our hands, we need not, for some time to come, worry about a military adventure on the west—and this despite the fact that her armoured division and air force are relatively intact.

Bhutto's antics are really the wriggling of a fish on the hook; and if we shed the sentiment which we think appropriate to a magnanimous victor and cease to desire fraternal huggings to the sound of Urdu lyrics, we would see this. Bhutto is playing from a hand which holds no trumps, and neither the Chinese nor the Americans are in a position at the moment to put any there. All that we, therefore, need to do is to sit tight and wait, and let the dividends of the military action flow in of themselves.

It is Bhutto who is, rightly from his point of view, a middleaged man in a hurry. pressure on him to secure the release of the prisoners of war will steadily mount, and force him to offer us more in exchange. As time passes, recognition of Bangla formalization Desh, as international boundary of the cease-fire in Kashmir, and much else will seem not too great a price to pay for the return of his captive men. His only hope is to whip up such lashings of emotion as to blur the vision of India; and with any other country than India, it would be absurd even to expect it.

The only virtue that India requires is patience. But this, for some reason or other, seems most difficult for us to attain. We are either in unholy haste or we are anxious to forget. The makers of our public opinion would do well to remember Eliot's lines:

Teach us to care and not to care Teach us to sit still.

In South Asia, therefore, India, while she builds her relations in

the new framework, with Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma and Ceylon should await Pakistan's attainment of stability as a broken-back, substandard State with no power relevance to India. Beyond South Asia, the poser article asks us to be warv of involvement in West and East Asia. The Arabs are not friendly, the Japanese are unpredictable (who is not?). These warnings are valid, but they hardly seem to be required. I am yet to come across any sane Indian who has been so overwhelmed by illusions of grandeur and armed might that he believes in India's new sanction of strength and wishes to use it to settle all the problems of the world. Rather, everyone realizes that India has emerged as the core power in our own part of the world, and is only concerned with the attitudes \mathbf{of} super-power, and the aspirant super-power, to South Asia.

Ladeed, from the larger viewpoint, India's role in Asia and the world is poised on her relations with the United States, the Soviet Union and China. With the United States relations are not likely to improve so long as Nixon is in the White House. He and Dr. Kissinger lack both the mental agility to recognize an error and the flexibility to revise their policy. The most extraordinary aspect of United States policy in recent months has been the sheer amateurishness of it. invitation to China was secured in the most abject fashion and nothing tangible was gained from the visit. China's prestige was built up, Formosa was in principle abandoned, Japan and the allies in South East Asia were given a sense of betrayal—and in return? Nothing, not even a face-saving in Indo-China. Even if the visit had been meant only to secure reelection it was undertaken far too soon. By now the gilt has been rubbed off by the disaster in Vietnam, and even the trip to Moscow, if it does come off, may not provide enough dividends to ensure a victory at the polls.

With the Soviet Union and China at loggerheads, there has always been an opening for the United States to benefit from it, but the Nixon-Kissinger team has muffed its chance. Only their composite genius could have produced a situation from which both the Soviets and the Chinese have benefited. The Soviets have made it clear that it is they who matter in the final analysis; and the Chinese have secured the diplomatic support of the United States without changing or even shifting their policies.

In the case of the United States, too, as in the case of Pakistan, India's best policy is to lie low, to watch the floundering of the Nixon regime and await the return of the United States to intelligent leadership and rational policies. The United States is a great power, and no great power will, and indeed can, tolerate for long so cheap and gimmicky a policy as we are witnessing today. Nothing, not even nuclear power, can make up for the lack of intelligence in diplomacy.

As for the Soviet Union, we have a treaty with her. It is a weariness of words to debate whether that agreement is compatible with non-alignment. The fact is that, having signed it and secured advantages from it, we should still continue to do so. For that treaty is not yet barren, and in the present posture of world affairs, with the face of the United States set against us and the Chinese not yet having come round to improving relations with India, the Indo-Soviet agreement is still fertile.

Our role in Asia and the world is based on our image and preponderance in South Asia and strengthened by our friendship with the Soviet Union. And many as are the problems and hazards, never, in the last twentyfive years, has the prospect seemed so healthy, natural, and full of possibilities of the right kind. So let us, for the time being, hard as it might seem, just sit still and wait. Not very exciting—but clearly rewarding.

Regional cooperation

K. R. NARAYANAN

favourite observations was that India will count for a lot or for nothing in the world. Though India is united and stable enough expressed in extremist terms, there to organise purposefully is a kernel of truth in this view. fundamental factors, she will India's geographical position, size, inevitably occupy an important resources, population, culture and place in international affairs, and

ONE of Jawaharlal Nehru's civilization have made her a favourite observations was that country of destiny even in her state of undevelopment.

when she is not able to do so, she will be played upon by the great powers rather than playing her legitimate role in the world. More than in the case of any other country, it is what happens at home that will determine India's place and influence in Asia and the world.

This is not to say that until India becomes a great economic and military power, she will have no significant international role and that she should abstain from pursuing an active foreign policy and from getting involved in the complex politics of Asia. It is quite true that neither the economic development nor military strength of India is such as to support a grandiose foreign policy in the foreseeable future. It would be a tragic mistake if the exhilaration over the victory over Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh prompted us into an intransigent posture in the subcontinent and too ambitious policies in our neighbourhood. On the other hand, it would be equally unfortunate if we turned inwards in a mood of splendid isolationism and absorbed ourselves in internal consolidation and glory to the detriment of an active and positive foreign policy. Even from the point of view of maintaining polistability and economic progress at home and in creating an appropriate international environment for such stability and progress, a dynamic external policy projecting India into the mainstream of Asia and international developments is essential.

During the period when India exercised beneficial influence on several critical international situations and was held in high esteem the world over, neither the economic nor the military position of the country was significant. One may admit that the circumstances of the cold war were partly responsible for catapulting India on the world scene in such a dramatic manner. But that is only a partial explanation. The main reason was that India gave to herself and

to the world an impression of self-confidence, of a united and stable nation of hundreds of millions of people moving from historic stagnation and wretchedness towards progress and enlightenment. Today an impression of this kind is not enough to make any impact either in India or abroad as people demand and want to see concrete results and more intensive satisfaction of rising expectations.

But then the material base of Indian progress is vastly stronger today. The green revolution—one can say this without exaggerating its extent—has transformed 'the ship to mouth existence' of the Indian people to one of self-sufficiency and has brought the country a degree of prestige in the more well-fed countries of Asia which had an attitude of contemptuous sympathy for the conditions of the Indian masses. The industrial development and the scientific and technological advancement of India have also now reached a stage when, notwithstanding the recent dip in the rate of industrial growth. it is possible to make further and more rapid progress in the future.

On the military plane, India's prestige is at its highest since Independence. Though it is unrealistic to claim that the victory over Pakistan has made India a great military power, it is clear that the Indian armed forces are now in a position to provide a reasonable degree of security to the nation, and, with greater attention to the building up of the Air Force and the Navy, India will be a power factor of some significance in the region. It is, however, not possible nor is it India's objective to become a predominant economic and military power in the region. In the emerging circumstances of Asia it is hardly practicable even for countries like China and Japan with all their military and industrial power to impose hegemony over the rest of the continent.

What is evolving in Asia is a complicated and quivering balance

of forces in the fashioning of which India has an important part to play. The impressive political unity and stability, together with the sensation of social change that Mrs. Indira Gandhi has brought to the Indian scene, provide India with an opportunity to gather together the material factors and the social forces generated in the country for a well-planned move forward in the future. A serious and sustained effort of such magnitude can make an important though not dramatic impact on developments in the subcontinent and in Asia generally. The basic and immense efforts of building up India, the intricate tasks of solving the problems of the sub-continent. and the larger endeavour of contributing to peace and co-operation in Asia, have to be pursued almost simultaneously with due regard to priorities and without adventurist diversions in one field or another.

Lt is mevitable that the subcontinent should be India's primary pre-occupation. Indeed, it has been so hitherto and we have been accused of following a Pakistanoriented foreign policy in several areas of the world. The fact is that sub-continental politics are hinged, on the one hand, to the domestic situation and, on the other, to the international power game. In the domestic field what has determined India's superior position, apart from the factor of size, are the sound policies followed—secularism, democracy. socialism and non-alignment—all ot which have proved to be more valid than communalism, milidictatorship and military alliances which Pakistan followed. It is clear that India will have to continue its internal policies and maintain its military strength in order to consolidate its position in the sub-continent. And since some of the serious hindrances to peace and co-operation in the area emanate from the policies of the the great powers, we will have to pay continuous attention to Asian and global politics for bringing

about a new order in the sub-continent.

That sub-continental relations are not everything can be seen from the fact that even when Pakistan was united and strong with powerful allies, India could exercise considerable influence in the international field by virtue of sound policies pursued at home and But there is no doubt abroad. peace that and co-operation between India and Pakistan will be a priceless asset for both countries and that it would remove not only conflicts and wars between them but the perpetual danger of foreign intervention in the affairs of the region.

The question of reconciliation with Pakistan bristles with difficulties. In present day international politics, a military victory does not necessarily result in an equally decisive success in the ensuing negotiations. While one cannot gain at the conference table what has been lost in the battlefield, one may lose in negotiations or by sheer efflux of time and events at least part of what has been gained in the battlefield. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that India enjoys considerable advantages in dealing with Pakistan.

In the long-term, the emergence of Bangladesh has not only reduced Pakistan into a middling State from one aspiring parity with India but has reduced its capacity to make war against India. Governed by the ghosts of the past and goaded by China and the United States, President Bhutto might still entertain the idea of another round with India. His visit to West Asian countries before the summit with Mrs. Gandhi suggests that he is trying to gather behind him all possible international support in dealing with India. He seems to be caught uncertainly between the old Pakistan policy of relying on foreign countries and the current necessity of reaching a direct accommodation with India. Above all Bhutto has not quite

accepted that the two-nation theory is dead. Even though for Pakistan pull of India. through geography, history, culture and economics, is more powerful than the pull of West Asia through religion, desperate attempts are being made to force Pakistan into the West Asian orbit. Perhaps there is also the vain hope that in the future a new upsurge of Islamic communalism might occur the sub-continent affecting Bangladesh as well as India.

As against this favourite hallucination of Pakistan's, there is the immediate necessity of getting the 90,000 prisoners of war in India and the withdrawal of Indian troops from Pakistan territory and the Pakistan side of the cease-fire line in Kashmir. Both these are powerful internal issues in Pakistan on the solution of which will depend Bhutto's political future. However, in recent weeks Bhutto have strengthened seems to his political position, and he might believe that he has now time to bargain with India. He might well be prepared to settle issues connected with the war in the Eastern front and try to swap recognition of Bangladesh for the prisoners of war, leaving Kashmir question pending for future settlement, hoping that China or the United States or some internal deterioration Kashmır or India would come to the help of Pakistan. This only means that Bhutto has not drawn the right conclusions from the history of Indo-Pakistan wars.

One cannot imagine that the shrewd and tough-minded policy-makers of the Government of India would agree to such a dangerous and patch-work peace settlement. However, India cannot afford to give an impression of intransigence. Once Pakistan recognizes Bangladesh and the basic status quo in Kashmir, we should be prepared to make generous concessions on other matters and go all out to give our support

to the independence, stability and progress of Pakistan.

In this unpredictable context it is audacious to think of a subcontinental system of friendship and co-operation. Yet that is the need of our times and the destiny the region. Constitutional arrangements like confederation and formal economic institutions like a Common Market and a Customs Union are outside the realm of practicability in the foreseeable future. But gradually the process of trade, cultural exchange, and a limited degree of economic cooperation could be developed leading up eventually to some political understanding among the sovereign States of the sub-continent. Pending a settlement with Pakistan this process could be applied to those parts of the region which are ready for such co-operation.

Bangladesh has provided a golden opportunity for promoting the conception of a sub-continental system of friendship and co-operation. The favourable factors here are obvious, but in the long run Bangladesh will be a severe test for Indian diplomacy and statesmanship. One major point for us to remember is that political consciousness, especially the radical nationalist sentiment, has found much more intense development in Bangladesh than even in West Bengal as a result of what the country has gone through under Pakistani terror. For the same reason, unless the leadership and the administration prove to be imaginative and extraordinarily capable, the impetus of internal changes might take the country in a direction that is unhelpful to the larger objectives of co-operation. Pakistan, China and the United States are waiting to exploit any such tendencies that may develop. The crying need of Bangladesh for economic aid will be utilized by some foreign powers to wean the new country away from India.

On her part, India has so far done the right things by Bangla-

desh and has been extremely sensitive to the national aspirations and the golden pride of the people. The character and scale of India's economic assistance to Bangladesh is such as to promote the longterm dream of sub-continental co-operation. The significance of the Treaty of Peace and Cooperation between the two countries is that it embodies this 'Treaties', General de dream. Gaulle once remarked, 'are like roses and young girls. They are fine as long as they last.' Treaties remain live and active so long as the conditions which brought them into existence last. Therefore India and Bangladesh will have to strive consciously to maintain the current harmony of interests.

 T_{he} fundamental conception behind the Indo-Bangladesh Treaty is the same as that of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal signed in 1950. That the wording of some of the crucial clauses is similar to the Indo-Soviet Treaty should not obuterate this fact. According to Article 1 of the Indo-Nepal Treaty, The two governments agree mutually to acknowledge, and respect the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of each other.' This is also the central clause in the Treaty with Bangladesh and it is on the scrupulous observance of this provision that the actual operation of the Treaty will depend. Article 2 of the Nepal Treaty taken together with the letters exchanged is in substance identical to Article 9 of the Treaty with Bangladesh. 'The two Governments', says Article 2, 'hereby undertake to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighbouring State likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two countries.' The letters exchanged strengthen this clause by providing that Neither Government shall tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor. To deal with any such threat the two Governments shall consult with each other and devise effective counter-measures.' From this

it is clear that the consultation and security provisions of the Indo-Bangladesh Treaty is not a brand new concept and that they embody that basic minimum of common defence and foreign policy interests inherent in the relations among the sovereign States of the sub-continent.

The major responsibility for making these minimum common interests the basis of a sub-continental system of peace, friendship and co-operation devolves upon If the relations among India. Bangladesh India, and Nepal could be made model a of co-existence, non-intervention. equality and mutual benefit, Pakistan would not be able to keep out for long. It must be demonstrated that this system is not a device for Indian domination of the region or for the creation of a narrow and inward-looking group. All that is needed is that the countries of the sub-continent in accordance with their common interests should look to one another for co-operation, while fashioning their own relations with the rest of the world in full freedom without hurting the interests of the others. In this way the sub-continent will be able to preserve its independence from outside intervention and play a decisive role in promoting peace. stability and progress in Asia.

Indian foreign policy, even in its most idealistic moods, has never pursued the hallucination of an Asian federation or union, though, somewhat spasmodically it has worked for expanding Asian co-operation. Today, with the rise of great Asian powers like China and Japan and a number of independent and intensely nationalistic middle and small powers, and with the super powers hovering above and intruding into the affairs of the continent, Asian co-operation has to be seen in terms of creating an equilibrium of forces in Asia in the context of the global balance of forces. India's role in Asia is, therefore, integrally connected to her relations with the super powers.
While believing in full-blooded
Asian co-operation with the rest of the world, India has always seen the role of outside powers, including that of the two super powers as peripheral and contributory. That was one of the main features of the policy of non-alignment. However, the super powers have not always seen their role in Asia in the same way and it is still an unresolved issue.

It is one of the irones of modern international history that in spite of so much basic political and institutional affinity, the United States and India could not agree on most major Asian issues, be they the problems of the sub-continent, the question of military pacts, China policy, the Japanese Peace Treaty, various aspects of the Korean and Indo-China questions, and above all the Vietnam war. There has been a continuing clash of fundamental approach, except during the last years of the Eisenhower administration and the brief Kennedy era, a clash which seems to have reached the climax in the present Nixon-Kissinger period. It is undoubtedly in the interests of India and her role in Asia to have harmony and understanding with the United States. Not to be at cross-purposes with Washington would be helpful to India in its relations with Japan, China, South East Asia and the Soviet Union. But the harmony cannot be established by India agreeing to America's misconceived approach to Asian problems and succumbing to its strategy of a Washington-Tokyo-Peking entente to outmanouvre the Soviet Union and India in Asia. Far from acquiescing in all this there is a case for India to oppose more forcefully the reckless career of American policy in Vietnam.

Fundamentally, what is wrong is the perception of the present U.S. administration of India's place in Asia and perhaps the future of India itself. That perception does not seem to envisage any important Indian role in Asia and regards India and the sub-continent as an arena for the balancing game of the great powers. President Nixon in his Report to the Congress propounded the doctrine of balanced relationship of outside powers with the sub-continent, which really meant that in some-

what the same way in which nineteenth century China was divided territorially among the great powers, the sub-continent today should be divided in terms of political influence among them, without any one power enjoying excessive influence.

The assumption behind this doctrine is that India and this region are some kind of a political play-ground for the big powers. Sooner or later the USA will realize that the best guarantee against the bug-bear of foreign demination in this part of the world is support to the progressive nationalism and the independent policies of a country like India and not the vain attempt to checkmate and hamper India by encouraging anti-Indian forces and endeavouring to bring about an equilibrium in foreign influences and pressures on India. On her part India has, in the interests of her Asian and international roles, kept the door wide open for a dialogue and a reconciliation with the United States, at the same time asserting unmistakably her identity as an independent power.

By a combination of geography, circumstances and the vagaries of American and Chinese policies, India and the Soviet Union have come much closer together than would have been possible otherwise. The advantages of this cannot be minimised for the two countries and for the region as a whole. On the international plane, it has restored somewhat the political balance which was upset by the U.S.-China detente and it has enabled India to function in Asia with a greater degree of freedom and self-confidence. It is, however, important that the Indo-Soviet Treaty and the increasing economic and military ties between the two countries do not give the impression to the countries of Asia that India and the USSR are ganging up together.

The greatest asset that India has in influencing Asian developments is its independent and non-aligned posture. Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi in various statements as well as in her actions has shown

that the Treaty with the Soviet Union and the assistance that Moscow gave India during the Bangladesh crisis have not in any way restricted India's freedom of action. She has on several occasions publicly announced her willingness to normalize relations with China. In February last, in an interesting interview to C. L. Sulzberger she remarked, referring to the help India received from 'One of our the Soviet Union: faults is that we are unable to display gratitude in any tangible sense for any thing... countries help one another because they need one another.'

Foreign Minister Swaran Singh, in a recent statement in Parliament, removed one of the common misconceptions about India's relationship with the Soviet Union, when he clarified that in regard to collective security in Asia, India would pursue its ideas independent of the Brezhnev proposals. We must, however, realize that there are lingering doubts in Asia which can be removed by presenting independent and coherent Indian proposals on Asian security after consultations with the countries of the region and taking into account some of their own ideas and proposals. This need not imply any departure from the plank of Indo-Soviet co-operation and the fact that the Soviet Union has a legitimate and constructive contribution to make to the affairs of Asia.

In the Asian triangle of powers, as distinct from the so-called global triangle and the Pacific quadrilateral, India's equation with China and Japan is of crucial importance for her place in the region. The more friendly and flexible are our relations with each of these Asian giants, the greater will be the contribution that we can make to the stability and security of Asia. Indeed, it is difficult to visualize a peaceful and stable order in Asia unless a balance of co-existence is struck among these three emerging Asian powers.

India's relations with Japan, good in normal diplomatic terms, are marked by the absence of both hostility and friendly intimacy. It

is commonly said that India with its non-aligned attitude was responsible for this somewhat stand-offish relationship. The fact of the matter is that right from the time of the San Francisco Treaty, India made gestures to Japan, except for joining the American camp and adopting a free enterprise system of economy for the country. During the last five or six years India has been expressing her interest in participating in the Ministerial Conference for the Economic Development of South East Asia sponsored by Japan without evoking any positive response from Tokyo. Besides, by no stretch of reasoning can one say that Japan's role in the major challenge of India's development is significant in terms of India's requirements or Tokyo's capability. Part of the reason is no doubt geographical distance and historical unawareness, but one suspects that there is also some underlying sense of long-term rivalry in respect of South East Asia.

The recent dramatic changes in Sino-American relations, the emergence of India as the principal power in the sub-continent after the Bangíadesh crisis, and the possible utility of India in the future as a balancing factor in relation to China—all these might for the first time arouse in Japan a clearer urge for closer co-operation with New Delhi, opening up new important opportunities for India's Asian policy.

On any reckoning, the way in which Sino-Indian relations are going to develop will determine to a large extent the future set-up in Asia and the part India will play in it. It is no longer a question of India's policy or initiative, because India has already recognized China's rightful place in Asia and declared her readiness to normalize relations. The question now is whether China is prepared to accept India's legitimate position in the sub-continent and in Asia. The weight of evidence so far points to the persistent policy of Peking to cut India down to size.

It is incredible but the Chinese seem to be working on the analysis

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that Indian unity and stability are ephemeral and that the forces of disintegration will sooner or later overtake the country. The Chinese Government's statement of December 16, 1971 declared ominously, It is known to all, India has its own nationality problems whose com-plexity and acuteness are rarely felt elsewhere in the world' and pre-dicted that 'henceforth there will be no tranquility over the South-Asian sub-continent.' On December 18th, Chou En-lai added to this by asserting that 'The fall of Dacca is ultimately not a so-called milestone towards victory for the Indian aggressors, but a starting point of endless strife in the South-Asian sub-continent and their defeat.' Again in January he told M. Mendés-France in Peking that Indian unity is menaced by Sikh, Kashmiri and other nationality problems and that 'The trouble in the region will continue. India will have stoked a fire which will burn it.'

For China, as perhaps for some others, the creation of Bangladesh is not a triumph of secularism and the prospects of co-operation in the sub-continent, but the recrudescence of the dark historic forces of disunity. The enormous preoccupation of Peking with Pakistan is understandable only in this context. However, facts are bound to have their impact on China and sooner or later she must realize that the policy of balancing and breaking India has failed and that peaceful co-existence is the best policy towards India.

On her part, India, while preserving the leverage it has acquired in co-operation with the Soviet Union, should be prepared to move independently todemonstrably wards China and the rest of Asia. For, fundamentally speaking, Asian and international circumstances are making it necessary for China not only to play the higher power game with the super powers but to join together with the countries of the third world. Reasonably good relations between India and China have become one of the necessary ingredients of the situation. Once it is proved, as it is likely to be, that in the Indian sub-continent there are no major short-term advantages to be obtained by pursuing the old policy, Peking might show greater willingness for accommodation with India. So far as India is concerned, for making a contribution to Asian developments and for securing a positive role in Asia what is needed is not any kind of intimate or enchanted relations with China but normality and some kind of modus-vivendi.

The concrete substance of India's role in Asia depends, apart from the sub-continent, on her position in the vast areas of West Asia and South East Asia. Obviously, India's economic and military power is not such as to make any big impact in these regions. But then none of the other Asian powers also occupies a predominant position, and the super powers are too deeply involved in local conflicts and too uncertain of their future grip over developments there. It is important that without diverting too much attention and resources from internal and sub-continental problems in both West and South East Asia. India should take active interest. Until settlements are reached over the bitter and complicated conflicts raging in these regions it is hardly practicable to implement any proposals for collective security or regional economic co-operation.

In West Asia there is reason for India to be unhappy over the attitude of the Arabs in the Bangladesh crisis, but that is no valid reason for a change in fundamental policy. If we persist in our traditional policy towards the Arabs, the facts of power in the sub-continent will inevitably result in the correction of the balance they have struck. To de-emphasize the relations with West Asian countries, precisely at the time when Pakistan itself has been weakened, would be nothing but shortsightedness. What is required is to be a little more selective in the application of India's economic and diplomatic resources in the region. It is possible to redistribute the emphasis of our policy without disturbing our connections with traditional friends like the UAR. We should also assess how far Britain is today a beneficial non-imperial factor in the Gulf and the Union of the Arab Emirates. A very major factor which eventually ought to be helpful to India's connection with West Asia is the new position of the Soviet Union in the region in the context of the coincidence of interests of the two countries in Asia generally.

A meaningful development on the West Asian fringe of India and Pakistan is the suggestion put forward by Premier Kosygin on May 30, 1969 for 'the development of mutual relations and constructive co-operation' among Pakistan. India and other States of the region. This is an elaboration of the proposal for transit arrangements among the same group of countries made by the Soviet Union in 1966 and is undoubtedly linked to the wider proposal for collective security in Asia made by Brezhnev on June 7th and reactivated recently by the Soviet Government. The strategic significance of the scheme for the Soviet Union is obvious. In the past, Pakistan had rejected the Kosygin plan, but the time may now be ripe for taking this up again in the context of a general Indo-Pakistan settlement to the benefit not only of the Soviet Union but primarily of the countries of the subcontinent. This arrangement need not be to the detriment of China's vital interest in transit to West Asia through Pakistan. Indeed, China has a legitimate place in a regional co-operation arrangement covering this area and ought to be included if she is prepared to come in.

South East Asia presents a more complex and urgent situation. India has greater advantages in this region but the emerging power structure, not to speak of India's own objectives and inclinations, does not permit her a predominant role. As pointed out earlier, the best that can be obtained is some kind of a balance of co-existence among China, Japan and India in the context of a free and independent South East Asia, neutral or non-aligned in respect of outside powers as well as the great Asian powers themselves. Safeguarding and strengthening the

sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the nations of the region is the foundation on which such an equilibrium can be erected. Fortunately, this accords with the traditional policy of India in the region. Until the barbarous Vietnam war is over and a settlement in Indo-China reached, all attempts for collective security and regional cooperation would remain still-born. It is interesting that the first serious Indian proposal for a collective agreement or convention was made by India in regard to Indo-China.

Speaking in the Indian Parliament on April 24, 1954 on the eve of the Geneva Conference, Jawaharlal Nehru proposed among other things: 'A solemn agreement on non-intervention denying aid, direct or indirect, with troops or war material to the combatants or for the purposes of war, to which the United States, the USSR, the United Kingdom and China shall be primary parties, should be brought about by the Conference. The United Nations, to which the decision of the Conference shall be reported, shall be requested to formulate a convention of non-intervention in Indo-China embodying the aforesaid agreement and including the provisions for its enforcement under the United Nations auspices. Other States should be invited by the United Nations to adhere to this convention of nonintervention.' It was essentially this proposal that was embodied in the Geneva Declaration and later incorporated in the Laos Agreement of 1962 without the provision concerning the United Nations.

It was also an extension of this proposal which was contained in Mrs. Indira Gandhi's suggestion for a General Convention to be signed by Asian powers as well as outside powers, embodying mutual respect and guarantees for the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the countries of the region and the neutrality or non-alignment of those countries which wished to remain-neutral or non-aligned. The concept of regional economic co-operation could be added to this Convention, though for practical purposes it might be

wiser to separate economic co-operation from the political convention and pursued under the auspices of ECAFE's Asian Council of Ministers, or in appropriate sub-groups, or bilaterally, according to requirements.

There is similarity between the idea of this Convention and the Brezhnev proposal for collective security. That can be used to ensure Soviet support to it, but for the general acceptability and success of this Convention, as well as for reasons of Asian identity and independence, it is essential that it is not linked or made to appear to be linked to the Soviet proposal. Further, by a process of democratic consultations with the South East Asians some of the proposals made by them like the ASEAN plan for neutralisation could be absorbed in or associated with this Convention.

It is reasonable to question the utility of a general Convention of this kind when the Geneva Agreements lie in bloody shambles and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have been violated and trampled upon. Treaties and Conventions are nothing more than formalisation of existing facts and Even the most iron-clad trends. military pacts and alliances have proved to be useless in many a crisis and have become generally irrelevant with the evolution of the international situation. The important fact is that Asia is gradually but ineluctably moving into a period when it might be in the interests of the powers to accept and observe the Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and to co-operate with one another. All that statesmanship and diplomacy can do is to capture this mood and to make nations commit themselves to a code of international behaviour and course of practical action particularly in regional economic co-operation. Needless to say that any such arrangement should embrace all countries including China.

One specific problem of immense scope is that of the Indian Ocean. There is a basic unanimity of opinion among all Asian countries that the Indian Ocean must be an area of peace, free of great power rivalries and tensions and also of nuclear weapons. While we should put forward these general ideas in every international forum, for India the real task is progressively to build up its navy and to develop so far as possible the strategically priceless islands of the Andamans, the Nicobars and the Laccadives which would give India a firm position at the vast flood-gates of the Indian Ocean.

Much emphasis has been placed on regional co-operation and collective security. But these, even if they can be realized in practice, are only the icing on the top of the cake. The main substance of Asian relations, and especially of India's relations with the rest of Asia, is bound to remain bilateral or subregional for a considerable time until economic and technological development lift Asia to the higher level of over-all co-operation.

We in India are particularly prone to wax enthusiastic over the general and the abstract and neglect the specific and the concrete. With the industrial and technological advance that we have achieved, we are now in a position to enter into limited but effective bilateral cooperation with our neighbours and with selected countries in South East Asia. A multi-faceted bilateral programme of economic and technical joint enterprises executed over a period of years will provide India with the objective elements as well as the atmosphere for a realistic pursuit of regional co-operation in Āsia.

India also has the capacity to build up a system of effective subregional co-operation in South Asia Bangladesh, Pakistan. covering Nepal and Bhutan and also perhaps Ceylon and Burma. On this limited but substantial basis, utilising the close political and cultural relations with South East Asia, taking advantage of the favourable conditions that Indo-China may provide after the Vietnam war, establishing normal and friendly relations with China and Japan, and striking the correct equation with the super powers, India will be able to make a contribution to the balance of forces as well as to peace, stability and progress in Asia.

An evolving role

R. K NEHRU

RECENT developments in the Indian sub-continent have raised many questions about India's role in Asia. What role did India, in the past, expect to play and why was its expectation not fulfilled? Have recent developments made some basic change in the situation for India? If so, what would be the appropriate role for India in this new situation?

The idea that India is destined to play a major role in Asia is not a new one. Twenty-five years ago, in the early days of Independence,

Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to claim that India had emerged as "the pivot of Asia". It was his conviction that India's geographical position, apart from actual or potential power, was such that on no Asian problem could its views be ignored. India's role, as he repeatedly emphasized, would not remain confined to its own part of Asia, but would extend to every other part, including West Asia, South-East Asia and East Asia.

Nehru's forecast which the Chinese subsequently chose to denounce

as an example of India's chauvinism may seem somewhat unrealistic today. The assumptions underlying it are, however, important. Asia's major problem at this time was the struggle against colonialism which, in Nehru's view. would inevitably be followed by a long period of internal development in the newlyindependent nations. Co-operation among them, as he often said, would be in their own interest and would be relatively easy if they re-mained free from cold war pressures. Fortunately, these pressures had not yet extended to Asia and the cold war was largely confined to Europe. India had also no serious rivals as China was still in a state of civil war and Pakistan was not yet the recipient of military aid. Although Nehru's ideas were challenged from the very start by the Chinese Communists and Pakistan was also consistently hostile, there was a favourable response from the other Asian peoples and India was able in these early days after Independence to establish some kind of moral ascendancy in Asia.

The situation changed in the fifties with China's emergence as a communist power and a close ally of the Soviet Union. The cold war was now extended to Asia with each side trying to fill the so-called vacuum created by the ending of the old colonialism by new methods of domination and control. Among these methods were the USA's military alliances, subversive propaganda by some communist countries and more subtle methods of gaining influence which were practised by both sides.

India, by its advocacy of independence, based on non-alignment, in addition to co-operation among the newly-independent nations, for purposes of development, so as to ensure that the vacuum was filled by their own strength and not by outside powers, was able to maintain its moral ascendancy for some years. Its position was, however, being steadily eroded by a variety of factors. India's own development was too slow to enable it to maintain its position in Asia. The mediatory role which it was occa-

sionally called upon by the great powers to play had created a sense of complacency. There was too much reliance on a diplomacy based on persuasion and personal influence, without the backing of adequate military or economic power. All these weaknesses were developing at a time when the nation's security was increasingly threatened by the arming of Pakistan by the USA and the growing conflict with China.

There was a further setback in the sixties when failure to settle the conflict with China led to the border war of 1962. China's alignment with Pakistan which was now used as an instrument for curbing India by both China and the USA, in spite of their mutual hostility, created fresh difficulties for India. In the eyes of the non-aligned and other Asians also, India had not only followed a course which it had deprecated in others by refusing to negotiate with China unconditionally, but had also shown its military weakness and unpreparedness.

There was the further question whether India, in spite of its prominent international role, had correctly assessed the changes taking place in the world situation. While Soviet influence was apparently counted upon to restrain China, a secondary cold war had already started between the two communist powers, side by side with the major cold war which was generally declining.

Fissures were also appearing among the non-aligned and other Asians, based on their conflicting interests and ambitions. Lack of support for India was not unexpected, but India's role which would have suffered in any case was still further reduced by the growing preoccupation with internal problems, including economic failures and political uncertainties during the interregnum between Nehru's death and Indira Gandhi's advent to effective power. India had shown good results in the war with Pakistan in 1965, but generally throughout the sixties, its standing in Asia was low.

The late sixties, however, have a special significance for other reasons. Earlier successes had led to

some atrophy in India's thinking. Ideas had become fixed, while the world was constantly changing. The role of power in international life, even in support of peaceful policies, was not sufficiently appreciated. India's intellectual community also which might have played a more constructive role was generally content to function as defenders of official policies. Some of these weaknesses of the system which account for India's setbacks were removed in the late sixties.

In a sense, this was a period of preparation for the future. While the idea of co-operation among the Asian States was never given up, even in India's darkest days, a more realistic approach was also made to the nation's economic, political, diplomatic and above all defence problems. The nationwide discussion of these problems showed how deeply public interest had been aroused. By the beginning of the seventies, as a result of all these efforts, a stronger apparatus had been created and greater co-ordination of policies ensured to meet the challenges of the future.

The immediate challenge has been successfully met by the recent war with Pakistan. Does this mean that the situation in Asia has basically changed in India's favour? On this question, there seem to be some conflicting views in India. The two-nation theory which Pakistan exploited in the past has of course been exploded. The direct threat from Pakistan to India's security has also lessened with the emergence of an independent Bangladesh. Although Pakistan's army in the west remains intact, its capacity for serious mischief has been reduced both by India's superior power and the halving of Pakistan's resources. Some of these developments would seem to suggest that India is now in a position to play a more active role in Asia. The strength and stability which it has shown in the recent crisis would seem to support such a view.

Internally, however, new commitments have been made in India to vast programmes of social justice and development. Externally, a more active role would imply the building of co-operative relations

on a bigger scale in the neighbouring regions through economic and other channels. The Indian region is of course of primary importance, but West and South-East Asia cannot be ignored as the three regions are closely inter-connected. All three are subject to similar pressures from outside which have a direct impact on India's own interests. Apart from economic co-operation on a bigger scale, India's role, if it is to be made more credible, must also include some contribution to regional security.

Critics of a more active role seem to be doubtful if such a role in so many fields is within India's means. India's economy, in their view, is neither strong enough, nor is likely to acquire sufficient strength in the foreseeable future, to support both an Asian programme of some magnitude and internal programmes of welfare and development. If the two programmes are expanded simultaneously, both may suffer and neither internal gains, nor gains in Asia, may be commensurate with the expenditure. Any addition of responsibility for regional security may make the burden unbearable.

India's role, in the critics' view, should also be considered in the light of larger developments in Asia. These developments are regarded as not wholly favourable to India. While in South Asia India has strengthened its position, in Asia as a whole, the situation is more complex. Both the cold war of the past and the secondary cold war between China and the Soviet Union are now overshadowed by a triangular power struggle. The USA. because of its failures in Asia and concern over Soviet successes, has turned to China as a potential ally. The Soviet Union. in order to redress the balance, has turned to India under the Indo-Soviet treaty. The treaty suits India as China and the USA have given every indication of a common interest in containing not only the Soviet Union, but also India.

Of greater significance, however, is the fact that all three powers in this triangular relationship, are widening their options steadily. While the Sino-American attitude

towards India remains unchanged, there is some lowering of the temperature in Sino-Soviet and Soviet-American relations. This might well mark the beginnings of a process of bargaining on a global scale among the three powers, if the Vietnam problem could homehow be solved.

Should some such bargain take place, would it include the question of India's position in South Asia? No one can be sure about the future, but this possibility has to be kept in mind. The old policy of China and of the USA of making use of Pakistan as a counter-weight to India has of course suffered a setback. There is no indication, however, that it will not be resumed, or that intrigues against India among its smaller neighbours will be discontinued. These neighbours may be assumed to be either concerned over the emergence of a strong power in their region, or of divided mind over its possible consequences. Some of these uncertainties could be exploited by China and the USA by using every means, including the superior resources of the USA, to undermine India's efforts to promote regional co-operation.

India's security problem has also become more complex by the addition of a naval threat from the USA to the old threat from China and Pakistan. The Indo-Soviet treaty is a reassuring factor, but it provides only for consultations which are not bound to result in India's favour in every crisis. India has to depend upon itself, but its capacity for self-defence against so many threats cannot easily be augmented. For all these reasons, the critics have suggested that India should be cautious and should not attempt too much. Instead of courting failure, or attracting opposition, by initiating too much activity, it should confine itself to a modest role in its own region and try to strengthen its diplomatic position by seeking a better understanding with the USA which would be more amenable to reason than China.

While it will be readily agreed that whatever is attempted should

be within the nation's means, another approach to this question is also possible. India as a growing power, is bound to meet with resistance from other powers who may feel that their predominance is being threatened. A modest role, such as the critics have recommended, or excessive caution, will not improve the situation for India. In fact, it may encourage the hostile powers who will be guided by their own image of a resurgent India to intensify their efforts to arrest India's growth and influence. No nation has come into its own without taking some risks, or making a sacrifice, to overcome opposition from others. Only when it achieves its due position, through its own efforts, does the international community accept the new situation and the change in the status quo.

This was India's experience in the Bangladesh crisis which might have led the country to disaster if excessive caution had been shown. The Soviet Union in the past and China in more recent years have had similar experiences. It was not modesty which helped them. but a determined effort to establish the nation's rights. India's struggle may be somewhat easier as its aim is not to dominate over others, but to build a co-operative regional system, free from foreign interfer-The nations of the region stand to gain from such a system which has already been initiated by India in its own region and to a limited extent in West Asia and South-East Asia. Many of the collaboration schemes are self-paying and no great sacrifice on the part of India is involved. However, if sacrifice is needed to ensure greater stability in the region by an extension of foreign aid and other forms of assistance, would this be entirely beyond India's capability? Could not the food surplus which is already creating some problems for India and surplus capacities in some industries be utilised for this purpose?

Another possibility is the planning of India's major industrial capacities with a margin for foreign aid. The pessimism shown

by critics of an active role for India does not seem to be justified. An important point to remember is that while the Soviet Union and China are suspect in some neighbouring countries and the USA is averse to supporting public sector enterprises, India is in a better position to assist the industrialization process in the countries of the region. It is co-operation of this kind which will help to overcome their fears and suspicions which are being exploited by powers hostile to India.

The new developments in the international situation also call for a diplomacy which is both firm and flexible. Firmness on matters of principle and where vital interests are involved is the only language the world community understands. This is clear enough from India's experience in the Bangladesh crisis. At the same time, there is need for greater flexibility in a changing situation in India's relations with other nations. Fortunately, India's diplomacy is already showing some of these qualities which account for its recent successes.

A purely doctrinaire attitude towards non-alignment was given up when the nation's interests demanded a special relationship with the Soviet Union. This relationship, however, under the Indo-Soviet treaty, has been so devised that while creating benefits for both sides, the hands of neither are tied in its relations with other nations. The special relationship with the Soviet Union has been balanced with a tentative approach to China and the USA by keeping the door open for improvement of relations with these countries. It is desirable in the present state of international relations for India's capacity to manoeuvre to be increased to the maximum extent. Like the great powers, India is keeping its options open so that, at the appropriate time, relations with other nations which are at present hostile may be rebuilt on the basis of common interests.

The critics are not right in showing pessimism about India's relations with West and South-East Asia. West Asia is in a state of disarray and too much importance need not be attached to its neutrality, or support to Pakistan, in the recent crisis. The area as a whole is important to India for the same reasons as to the other powers. These reasons are partly strategic and partly the Islamic character of the area. India's interest obviously lies in adhering to a policy which will enable it to counteract anti-Indian intrigues and also to strengthen its role eventually.

South-East Asia is equally important for strategic and other reasons, but the nations of the region as also Bangladesh and other neighbours of India seem anxious to diversify their relations and not to become too dependent on one This is understandable and should not cause too much anxiety as the co-operative relations which India is trying to develop, should in the long run pay better dividends than the dominationoriented policies of China and the USA. India is right in attaching the highest importance to relations with its immediate neighbours. Here too, some success has been achieved in the case of Nepal and Ceylon and even greater success in the case of Bangladesh.

The crux of the matter is, however, relations with Pakistan and China. The USA's role is also hostile, but it seems to have been contained for the present by the involvement in Vietnam. Pakistan and China, on the other hand, have been a perpetual thorn in India's side. No one can say whether the negotiations initiated by India with Pakistan will succeed. Internal factors, including the role of the Army which may be thinking in terms of revenge, may prove to be decisive. China and the USA will also, no doubt, unless some change takes place in their policies, encourage Pakistan to stand firm on the issues in dispute. India cannot, however, antagonize Bangladesh by yielding to Pakistan on the prisoners of war issue. Nor would it be in its own interest to do so if there is no genuine prospect of some diminution of the threat from Pakistan. In spite of these uncertainties, however, India by showing so

much consideration to a defeated neighbour as to take the lead in negotiations, has set an example which may help to strengthen its role in Asia.

Amother unsolved problem of Indian diplomacy is relations with China. It was Nehru's view that there could be no real peace in Asia if India-China relations became hostile. Who is responsible for the present hostility is immaterial: the question is whether India, in its own interest and the larger interest of Asia, should take some initiative in making relations more normal. Ultimately, peace will come to Asia when China recognizes India's special position in South Asia as India has recognized China's special position in East Asia. South-East Asia, as Chou En-lai once said, will have to be an area of co-operation between the two countries. To this, Japan's special role and also North Vietnam's when the Americans finally withdraw must now be added.

Will the evolution of such an equilibrium be helped if India takes the first step in strengthening diplomatic relations with China? It is a mistake to give a higher priority to the settlement of the border problem. The Chinese waited for 100 years in the British period and after India's independence before they were ready to negotiate from a position of strength. India should also wait and should confine itself for the present to normalization of relations. It is astonishing how much speculation has been aroused in India by China's alternating smiles and frowns. What is needed for a less speculative assessment of China's intentions, is more direct contact at the highest diplomatic level on which the Chinese were keen at one time. Some such contact is particularly important at present when new thinking may be taking place in China and other important changes may be in the offing due to the advanced age of the Chinese leaders. Asia will not forgive its present-day leaders if on such questions as Vietnam they fail even to examine the possibility of some concerted move to put an end to the horrors being committed by a non-Asian power.

Favourable situation

RAJESHWAR DAYAL

INDIA is today in a unique position to restore its respect and influence in Asia and in the world to the level of the heyday of the Nehru era, and indeed, to surpass it. The country is united under a strong political leadership. It is stable and is progressing, and it has recently given a convincing demonstration of its military capabilities. These are the factors that create confidence at home and command respect abroad.

It is Marxist doctrine that a country's foreign policy is a reflec-

tion of its internal situation and policies. But this dictum is only partially true. In the 1950s India was far weaker economically, technologically and militarily than it is today, yet its international influence was quite out of proportion to its intrinsic strength. Now the facts of power have changed markedly in India's favour and there is a closer balance between India's internal strength and its foreign policy interests. The twilight period of the decade since the

Chinese attack of 1962 when India's prestige and credibility plummeted, has now decisively ended.

True, India's industrial and economic strength and the level of its foreign trade bears no comparison with the affluence of the great powers. Yet it has an enormous potential in its size, population and natural resources. If not yet a great power, it could, in the measurable future, hope to become one. Much will, of course, depend upon the inner and outer compulsions and opportunities and the country's response to them. Despite its evident present weaknesses, India is too significant a country to be overlooked in the councils of the world.

Let us first be clear about India's foreign policy aims aid interests. Basically, they have not altered since independence although the priorities and emphases must inevitably change. Also, the world situation is very different from what it was in the fifties and sixties. A rational and effective foreign policy must be geared to the world situation as it exists and not be tied down to the concepts of the past.

India's foreign policy objectives are to safeguard and strengthen its independence and security and to promote peace and understanding in the area and throughout the world. They are, further, to join in an international effort to further all forms of economic co-operation for the achievement of a more just and equitable world order.

These imply both policy goals and national attitudes. India has no territorial ambitions, no desire—or indeed, capacity—to impose its economic domination on others, and no interest in enforcing conformity with its will. But by precept and example and by staunchly upholding its own principles, it could make an impact on the Asian scene. If it becomes self-reliant without being chauvinistic, truly independent without being exclusive, prosperous without exploiting others, it could become a powerful influence for good in the area. It

could inspire an alternative line of policy among the States of South and South-East Asia who are now left to choose between the super powers It could thus help effectively in making South and South-East Asia an area of peace and harmony.

If these are the foreign policy objectives, are they at all attainable and if so, how? To use another Marxist phrase, are the subjective and objective conditions propinous?

India today is in a position of unchallenged supremacy in South Asia and indeed, in the Indian Ocean area. The distraction of Pakistan's counter-weight has been greatly reduced by the emergence of Bangladesh. True, Pakistan's erstwhile eastern wing was in many ways a political and military liability. But financially and economically, it was not. Even if one assumes the continuance of Pakistani hostility despite President Bhutto's asseverations, Pakistan's power of mischief is greatly curbed.

If Bhutto is to fulfil his exaggerated promises of a better deal to his harried people, can he afford to maintain his inflated military apparatus? It used to cost half the national budget; with the liberation of Bangladesh, it will cost seventy five per cent. Bhutto could hardly be so insensitive to the monumental change in the power equation as not to see that in his attenuated circumstances, the use of force against India would be even more disastrous than it has been in the past. The low-profile foreign policy which Bhutto now proclaims, suggests that he realises Pakistan's loss of strength and credibility in world affairs.

The presence of a friendly Bangladesh on India's eastern borders is not something to be taken for granted, as our relationship with the sensitive new State has to be carefully nurtured and will provide a test for Indian diplomacy and far-sightedness.

The Himalayan States can no longer regard India as a giant with

feet of clay, but there again, generous policies in regard to trade and aid must be pursued. The same holds good for relations with other neighbouring States. It is imperative to secure the advantages gained from the December war by building up firm and durable friendships with all the neighbouring States. This can be done by greater responsiveness to their needs and sentiments, as friendship is a plant of slow and tender growth.

India's policy towards South-East Asia has suffered from years of neglect. We have turned our backs on those who have entered foreign military alliances in search of security and with whose external policies we have disagreed. In foreign policy matters, one cannot expect conformism on the part of sovereign independent States as they must necessarily view the world from their own standpoint. But in a broader framework, it is possible to develop technical and economic exchanges with them, resulting in a better understanding of each other and opening the way for closer all-round relationships.

With President Nixon's China policy, the American protective umbrella has been rudely with-drawn, leaving the fragile system of U.S. sponsored military alliances tottering. The South-East Asian States are now floundering about, looking for new friends. When the American presence is withdrawn from the Asian mainland the choice would be not only between the two major Asian powers, China and Japan. India could provide a third alternative. China's expansionist and militant policies are deeply suspect while memories of Japan's 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' are still very much alive. India has an opportunity to participate meaningfully in the progress and development of the small States of the area by making an imaginative investment in capital and technical resources, but above all, in goodwill.

Could the United States hold on to its crumbling position in South-East Asia in the face of growing disenchantment at home and popular revulsion abroad? There is a strong surge of sentiment in the country against the United States trying to be the policeman of the world. The Vietnam tragedy has painfully demonstrated the folly of entanglement in the inner concerns of distant countries. With the latest adventure in brinkmanship, United States' policies will be thoroughly discredited in the area.

Would China, the Soviet Union or Japan try to step in when the United States pulls out, or is forced out? Whatever the intentions of these powers, and despite the temptations, the South-East Asian States are beginning to realise the danger of undue dependence on outside powers. They may yet discover that in unity with each other lies strength and in progress and development, security. This is a lesson which India should have learnt and which it could impart to others.

Vietnam has shown the impotence of overwhelming military power for the achievement of political ends. And not military power alone, for the economic benefits lavished on the South-East Asian States are also proving to be illusory. The Soviet Union is finding its heavy political and military investments in the Arab States to be a wasting asset. China's policies of penetration in Africa during the 1960s crashed in ruins and it is now trying to salvage what it can in Tanzania.

While it may be in the very nature of great powers to be expansionist, there are evident limitations to their power. Furthermore, they try to checkmate each other in the intended areas of expansion of their rivals. The U.S.S.R. and China are engaged in this exercise in North Korea and North Vietnam, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. in West Asia. These are areas of common interest to the Great Powers concerned. The U.S.A. has no common borders with the other but China and the Soviet Union have. Fortunately, the Indian Ocean area is outside the geographical orbit of any super or great power It is in the interest of India and the States on the seaboard, by developing a better understanding with each other, to exclude the competitive and disturbing presence of the global powers from the area.

The task of assistance in the reconstruction and development of the countries of South-East Asia is clearly beyond India's sole capacity. India could, however, join Australia and Japan in the effort. Such a multilateral arrangement would not be politically suspect and would have obvious economic advantages.

It should be welcomed by the Soviet Union if it makes the South East Asian States stable and self-reliant, and frees them from United States' domination. The United States, for its part, would be provided with an alibi for disengaging itself from its disastrous involvement in the affairs of the region. China's attitudes would perhaps be enigmatic but it would hardly welcome the insulation of the area from its expanding orbit. But the other powers could, in combination, neutralise Chinese opposition.

There remains the Arab world and India's relations with it. The Arabs are wallowing in their own frustrations, swept aside by the swirling tide of history. Their propensity to cling to the phantom of a Pakistan that never was, and to ignore the hard reality of Bangladesh-the second largest Muslim State in the world—should not swerve India from its traditional policies towards the region. But we should not exaggerate the importance of our Arab connection; neither should we reject it. should try to restore our unwith derstanding Egypt Lebanon, the two more dynamic. but less radical, States of the area. The others must inevitably modernise their outlook, but the process will take time and will need patience on our part.

Having turned tragedy into triumph in Bangladesh, India could, with vision, forbearance and determination, carve for itself a position of respect and authority in Asia and in the world. If the goal is clearly set and resolutely pursued, there is no reason why it should not be attained.

Our tasks

T. N KAUL

SIGNIFICANT and dramatic changes have taken place on the Asian continent during the last three decades. Until the late 1940s practically the whole of Asia was under one form or another of foreign domination. The emergence of Asian countries into independence in the late 1940s and the 1950s gave new dynamism to the Asian scene. The era saw a resurgence of nationalism in the continent. But Asian leaders recognised that independence and nationalism were not enough and their primary task was to give economic and social content to the political independence they had achieved in order to ameliorate the condition of their long exploited and poor people.

Asia's primary need was for peace; for only in peace would Asian Governments be able to undertake the tasks of social and economic reconstruction. For the maintenance of peace it was necessary that they should keep aloof from the rivalry and conflict between great powers and take their decisions on internal and external matters in the exercise of their independence and in their own national interests. For their advancement they needed coopera-

tion and help from the great powers as well as cooperation among themselves. That was the basic framework in which India, Indonesia, the UAR, Yugoslavia and other countries evolved the policy of non-alignment. But not all of the newly independent countries of Asia followed that policy subscribed to the principle underlying it. Indeed, India's largest neighbour in South Asia was among the first countries in Asia actively to get involved in western oriented military alliances. Pakistan's aim, in which it succeeded temporarily, was to secure on her side the intervention of foreign powers, western powers initially followed by China later, in her rivalry and quarrels with India.

The regimes to which Asian countries were subjected during the colonial era were objectionable not only because they were alien in character but also because they were despotic and lacking in response to the urges and aspirations of the people. India's struggle for independence was a classic example of what struggling Asian peoples wanted to achieve. They wanted to rid themselves of their foreign

masters of course, but they wanted, also, those alien regimes to be replaced by national governments responsive to their needs and wishes. As Mahatma Gandhi said, domestic tyranny would not be acceptable to the people as a substitute for foreign rule.

The recent happenings in Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign independent State—democratic, nationalist, so-cialist and secular in outlook—has to be viewed in this framework. In the emergence of Bangladesh, India's role, though crucial, was actually incidental in character. India came into the picture because a ruthless military regime deliberately pushed out 10 million of what it claimed to be its own nationals on to India, posing grave threats to the social, political and economic fabric of our society. There was no historical parallel to the situation Pakistan had created both for the people of East Bengal and for India. India was compelled to act decisively to eliminate the threat to its very existence. But even if circumstances had taken a different turn and India had not been compelled to act, the emergence of Bangladesh into independence could hardly have been avoided For the status of East Bengal and the treatment of its people as part and parcel of Pakistan stood in blatant contradiction of historical trends in Asia, especially South-Asia.

With the emergence of India and Pakistan as independent countries, East Bengal became a vassal of West Pakistan. As the democratic process progressed in the rest of the sub-continent Pakistan came under the domination of a military Junta. The military rulers of West Pakistan, instead of undertaking broadbased programmes of economic development, worked for the creation of an economic oligarchy by exploiting the human and material resources of East Bengal for the benefit of the people of Pakistan's western provinces, especially the Punjab. This situation could not possibly have lasted long.

While the general trend in the post World War II era was one of

progressive liberalism and socialism and secularism, Pakistan's rulers nursed their people on religious fanaticism as a means of their unity and confrontation against India. Thus, Pakistan stood in defiance of all that was worthwhile in Asia's struggle for freedom and independence: democratic reorganisation of newly liberated societies, aloofness from great power conflicts and rivalries and cooperation among nations for mutual benefit. As if the holocaust accompanying the partition were not enough, Pakistan embarked on its career as an independent State by invading the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir merely because it had a Muslim majority.

Pakistan's behaviour from the very start encouraged powers to intervene in the affairs of the sub-continent. Western Powers led by America and Britain intervened on the side of Pakistan politically as early as 1947. America's military support for and alliance with Pakistan followed in 1954. China's intervention on the side of Pakistan goes back to 1958/ 59 soon after the coup d'etat leading to the establishment of a military regime in Pakistan. It is significant that American foreign policy declarations, as recently as February of this year, spoke of the legitimate interests of the great powers in the Asian sub-continent to the neglect of the legitimate interests of the countries and people of the sub-continent themselves. India's future role in Asia has to be viewed in this general framework.

The emergence of Bangladesh is, as indicated, in tune with the general historical processes in evidence in Asia since the late 1940s. From the point of view of the countries of the Indian sub-continent, the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign independent State offers new opportunities and challenges for peace, harmony and cooperation. The new State will, no doubt, seek to establish relations with other countries in the light of its national interest, but contrary to Pakistan's posture of belligerence

towards India it is inevitable that Bangladesh will view its national interest in terms of friendly relations and active. mutually beneficial cooperation with India and India will do the same. Bangladesh will, therefore, also be a factor for intra sub-continental harmony and stability. The identity of interest between the two countries is reflected in the Treaty of Peace and Friendship which they recently signed. Pakistan cannot afford to remain outside this sub-continental cooperation for long. The people of Pakistan are tired and fed up with confrontation against India and which was deliberately whipped up by the military dictators of Pakistan to keep themselves in power. Bangladesh has shattered the so-called 'two nation' theory. Religion alone cannot bind together two disparate territories, nations and peoples. Religion can no longer be the sole basis of statehood.

The emergence of Bangladesh has cut Pakistan to a smaller size. It is, nevertheless, a large enough country with enough resources for a stable and viable State. So far as India is concerned, we do not consider it in any way to be in our interest that Pakistan should be an unstable or weak country. India would like to have friendly cooperative relations with Pakistan based on a sense of realism, understanding and mutual respect. Though at the moment Indian armed forces are in occupation of some territory of West Pakistan, India has no territorial designs on Pakistan and is ready to give Pakall assurances for the istan preservation of her sovereignty and independence.

The problems that exist between India and Pakistan can be resolved through bilateral negotiations. The problems in which Bangladesh is also concerned, e.g., the repatriation of the prisoners of war held in the joint custody of India and Bangladesh, will have to be discussed and resolved with the full participation and agreement of Bangladesh. But any such discussion must, as Sheikh Mujib has said, await Pakistan's recognition of the reality of Bangladesh. Given that, it could

well be the beginning of an era of understanding and cooperation among all the three countries of the Indian sub-continent.

India has developed friendly and cooperative relations with her other immediate neighbours, namely, Nepal, Burma, Ceylon, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Malaysia and Singapore. India and Burma have been smoothly carrying out the demarcation of the boundary between them. The recent visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal and the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade of Cevlon to India demonstrated the close bonds between India and these countries and held out prospects for further closer economic cooperation between them and India. For India, the countries of South-Asia are the area of the highest priority. India's aim in this area is to develop maximum cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Prospects for the success of this policy appear good.

While India is desirous and hopeful of establishing closer ties with her immediate neighbours. she cannot remain indifferent to the developments in the rest of the continent. We have experienced some disappointment in West Asia, in that most of the Arab States did not appreciate the true nature of the crisis leading to the emergence of Bangladesh and have been slow in recognising that reality. The situation in West Asia continues to be dominated by the Arab-Israeli question. Temporary strain in India's relations with some Arab countries on the issue of Bangladesh does not mean that India should change her policy.

India's policy is not opportunistic. It is based on the principle that no country has the right to aggress on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another country. India would welcome a settlement between Israel and the Arab States and stands by the November, 1967. resolution of the Security Council. India welcomes British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf region and the emergence of Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the State of United Arab Emirates. India is aware of

the great economic potential of the countries of West Asia, particularly in the field of oil, and is keen to promote its political, economic and cultural relations with the States of the region.

In East Asia the most significant development during 1971 was the abandonment by the United States of the policy of hostility towards the People's Republic of China by initiating a dialogue with that country. India welcomed the acceptance the United States of the reality of the People's Republic of China and hoped that the dialogue between the two countries would lead to the reduction of tensions in Asia and the world. We must, however, wait and see how relations between these two countries develop. The communique issued at the conclusion of President Nixon's visit to China gives some cause for concern in that it gratuitously mentions Kashmir. Any attempt by any of the great powers to carve spheres of influence or to intervene in bilateral issues between countries of Asia is bound to be resented and resisted.

It is also our view that any manipulation of the relations among the great powers to bring about a balance of power will be detrimental to the interests of world peace and to the interests of small and medium Asian powers in particular. In our judgement the flow of history has left the doctrine of the balance of power by the way-The concept of power has changed so radically in recent times that understanding and cooperation are the only means of ensuring peace and progress in the world. Our own relations with major powers of the region, e.g., China and Japan are and will continue to be guided by these considerations.

The recent developments in Indo-China, particularly Vietnam, indicate that the Sino-American detente has had no beneficial effect on the situation there. The conflict in Vietnam continues to dominate the political scene in South East Asia. India has consistently stood for a peaceful solution within the

broad framework of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962. The problem cannot be solved through demonstration and application of superior military power but only through the withdrawal or elimination of external intervention. The people of Vietnam should be left alone to settle their differences peacefully as they will. The Vietnamisation of war has failed. What is needed is Vietnamisation of peace through negotiations between the parties concerned.

The unresolved conflict in Indo-China and the suspicion and uncertainties resulting among the East South Asian countries following the Sino-American dialogue have led these countries. to think in terms of their security independently of big powers. Some of these advocate the neutralisation of South East Asian countries guaranteed by the big powers. But the problem is not confined to the security of small countries only; it is a problem of the peace and security of the whole of Asia.

Asia is a continent of many different religions and ideological beliefs, with many different political systems, and many divisions nurtured by alien interests during the colonial era. If peace in Asia is to be secured, big power domination, their rivalries and their penchant for the play of power politics should be kept out of Asia. That is why during her visit to South East Asia in 1968, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had proposed a convention signed by the Asian nations and guaranteed by the great powers for the independence, sovereignty and neutrality of the States of Indo-China.

The Indian Ocean looms large in any consideration of the security of South and South East Asia. India with a long coastline and being one of the major littoral States is perturbed at the growing military profile of the great powers in the Indian Ocean particularly the acquisition of bases like Bahrain and Diego Garcia. None of the littoral States is strong enough to resist the superior naval strength of the major powers. The intrusion of the Seventh Fleet into

the Bay of Bengal during the Bangladesh crisis represented an attempt by a major power to use her naval strength to put pressure on a littoral State. Indian policy on this question is fully in accord with the declaration of the Lusaka non-aligned conference of 1970 whereby the participants agreed to exert efforts in the United Nations for the adoption of a Declaration calling upon all States to consider and respect the Indian Ocean area as a zone of peace, free of nuclear weapons and free from great power rivalry and competition. India does not feel any justification for the establishment of military bases in the Indian Ocean for the protection of trade routes as it is in the interest of both the littoral States as well as the major trading nations to see that the maritime routes through the Indian Ocean remain free for all countries.

Some Powers tend to look askance at the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed in August, 1971. It is true that the Treaty was signed at a time when India was subjected to high pressure by Pakistan and its allies and to threats to the effect that one of the great powers might intervene on Pakistan's side if India were to take any action to put an end to the ingress of millions of refugees from East Bengal into India or to send back those who had already come and whose indefinite presence in India posed a grave threat to India's very existence. And it did have a deterrent effect on the adventurist designs of some powers.

However, it is not a mutual defence treaty; it is not directed against any particular powers. It gives a tangible form to the friendship and cooperation that has existed between India and the Soviet Union for many years. In Article IV of the Treaty, the Soviet Union recognises and respects India's policy of non-alignment. It does not in any way stand in the way of India cultivating friendly and cooperative relations with other minor or major powers of the world, including China. Indeed, India is keen to cultivate good relations with China. It is a bilateral

treaty between India and the Soviet Union. It is not, by any means, a spearhead for a military alliance, bilateral or regional.

In any discussion of India's role in Asia it should be remembered that traditionally India's approach to the problems of its own region or of the world has not been a military approach. Located as India is on the crossroads of Asia, historically she has been the meeting ground of different places, of different systems of philosophy and science from the East and the West. Unlike many other countries of Asia and Europe, India seldom set out on a course of conquest within the region or beyond. The missions that went from India to neighbouring countries and farther regions of the world were missions of peace. Today also, India is not seeking a power role for itself in South-East Asia, in Asia as a whole or in the world. India is not anxious to be included in any balance-of-power arrangement favouring this or that particular power. Our aim is to promote political understanding socio-economic cooperation and first in South Asia and then in Asia as a whole so that the people of our continent may live in peace and have an opportunity of improving the quality of their lives.

By the very character of the socio-political organisation of our society and by deliberate choice of policy we are committed to the non-use of force in finding solutions to international problems. India has had to take to arms on four occasions but that was in self-defence against unprovoked aggression. India's relations with other major countries of Asia, such as Japan, Indonesia and Australia, despite occasional differences on specific issues, have traditionally been cordial and cooperative. The emergence of Bangladesh can be a catalytic agent for the improvement of relations and of cooperation with not only Pakistan but also China. It is India's hope that her relations with these two countries will in the near future be much better than they have been in the past. That will be the aim and endeavour of India's foreign policy in the coming years. -

Books

INDIA, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA: PARTNERS IN

ASIA? Edited by J. D. B Miller, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1968.

In September of 1967, the Australian National University organized a tripartite seminar ostensibly to discuss possible areas and patterns of cooperation between India, Japan and Australia. The seminar seems to have been based on three suppositions. Firstly, that only the three participants enjoy the necessary resources, economic and military strength, and political stability to play any sort of meaningful role in Asia, jointly or even singly. Secondly, that an American military presence in South-East Asia was not likely to be a permanent or even a desirable factor. And, thirdly, that any Asian security system must be aimed, if not at the containment of China then, at least, at the maintenance of the status quo.

Furthermore, the Australians seemed to have been motivated in organising this seminar, by the belief that they could assume a leading role in Asia, especially with the assistance of India and Japan; that, in fact, Australia was the only country capable of taking on America's Asian role; and, finally, that it enjoyed the best geographical location for curbing Chinese attempts at expansionism.

There were 12 discussion papers. Four of them were by Indians, three by the Japanese and five by the Australians. The editor of this volume, J. D. B Miller, presented a 13th which aimed at providing some sort of synopsis to the preceding papers. These papers have of necessity dated, not just in terms of facts and figures but even in terms of political realities. However, some of the broader arguments still have relevance and, if anything, have gained in importance in the light of certain recent developments in Asian (Incidentally, I must clarify my usage of politics. 'Asia'—I employ it to cover the areas referred to by political scientists as South, South-East Asia and the Far East-including Japan but, of course, excluding Russia and China).

The first development was the admittance of China to the United Nations and the concurrent failure of the American inspired two-China policy. China has finally been 'recognized' and given access to an international force. In pragmatic terms, it is henceforth going to be more difficult for certain nations to adopt a superior tone in dealing with China and for them to behave at times, as if any Chinese decision or action was something to be treated with hostility, scorn or suspicion. The American 'abandonment' of Taiwan has added to a growing realization that an American military presence in Asia is not a permanent fact of life.

The second development was the emergence of Bangladesh. This has proved to be of prime import-

ance to India. It has had the effect of removing an entire front that needed military patrolling, has enfeebled India's perennial enemy, and has lessened the danger of a southward Chinese thrust from Bhutan in an attempt to gain overland access to the Indian Ocean. At the same time, it has led to the creation of another Asian State which could prove a powerful Indian ally—and a liability as well. At any rate, it could mean that India need not spend so much of its efforts and resources in protecting its boundaries and could allow it to begin thinking in terms of playing a positive Asian role.

The third development is a necessary concomitant to the first: the beginning of an attempt to find some sort of working compromise between America, Russia and China. This supposition is clearly supported by Nixon's recent visits to Moscow and Peking. Internal political and economic factors as also the pressure of opinion from the non-super powers has led these three political giants to realize the total waste and point-lessness of their current rivalry. It has become increasingly obvious that there could be no nuclear world conflagration because this would mean auto-destruction. Instead, these three powers have used other politically disturbed areas to wage indirect 'war' with each other using conventional weapons, in attempts to enlarge their spheres of influence.

The only conclusion has been that such confrontation is inconclusive—viz: Korea, Vietnam and the Middle East. Thus, Nixon's recent visits can only be explained in terms of some sort of understanding between these three powers that the time has come to cry halt. Such a conclusion is further supported by recent developments in China which seem to indicate a preference in Peking for diplomatic rather than military strategies.

Any such rapprochement between America, Russia and China would obviously find expression in Vietnam. Once the current Viet Cong offensive is lessened (and it is not inconceivable that Peking and Moscow are applying pressure on Hanoi to that effect) then it will be up to the Americans to prove their sincerity by continuing their disengagement policy. The eventual aim would be considerably to reduce American military presence in South-East Asia. But this would have to be matched by some sort of tangible signs from Moscow and Peking that they are reducing their material support to communist insurgents in South-East Asia. Thus, we are in for an uneasy truce in Asia with all three parties cautiously watching each other and the U.S. 7th Fleet never more than a day's distance away from potential trouble spots.

The result of all this would be some sort of security vacuum in Asia. And, to recapitulate, this seems to have been one of the pre-suppositions underlying the conference. Only two papers touched upon this

question—one by M. S. Rajan and the other by Yoshi-kazu Sakamoto. Rajan presented a fairly simplistic view of Asian security problems and alternatives and stated, without explanation, that intra-Asian co-operation in matters of security does not seem practicable at present and in the foreseeable future. He felt that Asia would have to continue to rely on a security system sponsored and supported by an 'external' or non-Asian power. Sakamoto, however, was not only more optimistic about the possibility of an indigenous Asian security system but even had some extremely important suggestions for the way in which this could be achieved.

Yet, even Sakamoto, in conjunction with all the other participants, felt that the basis of any Asian security system would be fear and containment of China. I think it is time that this somewhat emotional fear be overcome. First, is there any real need for an Asian security system to replace the American military presence? Yes, but not so much to contain China (or communism) but to ensure the continuation of peaceful and democratic political development in Asia. In short, any joint Asian military force will really have a police role.

Furthermore, such a system could be entirely indigenous and need have no reliance on 'external powers'. But, to have any sort of pragmatic reality, any Asian security system must have at least the support if not the participation, of China. Now, if one stops a moment and thinks, a question suddenly arises—then what would be the sanction of an Asian security system if China was part of it. As I said above, a sort of U.N. Asian peace force. More than an Asian security system, there is need for economic partnership and co-operation and the eventual creation of an Asian Common Market or Free Trade Area. It is possible that Asian co-operation in matters of security will lead to their joint participation in economic spheres.

Probably the biggest obstacles facing such a development are the inordinate dread of China, the rather fierce community feelings that Asians seem to possess as also the pure physical mass of the area under consideration. If these factors are allowed to have negative effects, then Asian countries will continue to look to the west to the detriment of their own interests nearer home. If, on the other hand, they stop having their western inspired and irrational fear of mainland China and make use of the current favourable factors to obtain understanding with Peking, then Asia could, collectively, become a great super power. Just imagine the effect in the U.N. of an Afro-Asian bloc under Chinese leadership or, at least its support.

Like all collections this book is patchy. However, three essays are certainly worth reading—Sisir Gupta on 'India and the future in Asia'; Yoshikazu Sakamoto on 'Peaceful Co-existence in Asia: A Japanese View' and J. D. B. Miller on 'The Conditions for Cooperation'. Unfortunately, the rather long section on economics has lost its relevance as it makes excessive use of 1965-66 data.

Tejeshwar Singh

THE ASIAN BALANCE OF POWER: A Japanese View by Michio Royama, Adelphi Papers No. 42 Nov.. 1967; Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

THE ASIAN BALANCE OF POWER: A comparison with European Precedents by Coral Bell, Adelphi Papers No. 44, Feb., 1968, Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

THE ASIAN BALANCE OF POWER IN THE SEVENTIES: An Indian view by K. Subrahmanyam, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 1968.

The three papers discuss a common theme of the balance of power in Asia. The three views expressed are representative of the three important countries of the Asian continent. The Japanese view predominantly assesses the role of Japan in the equation of the balance of power between the super powers and the emerging powers in Asia, i.e., China and Japan in particular. Bell, on the other hand, attempts to apply a Western-European model of analyses to the Asian scene. He starts with the ambitious enunciation of the doctrine of 'area of peace' announced at the Bandung Conference in 1965. Subrahmanyam presents, on the other hand, a perspective for an Asian balance of power in the seventies. His analysis, therefore, attempts to make some predictions about the emerging pattern of the balance of power in Asia.

Before we begin to analyse what these authors have to contribute to the theme of the balance of power in Asia, it would be useful to present a few facts about the Asian scene. This would provide a useful backdrop for the analysis. One of the important things to note here is that, except for Japan, all the countries of this region attained their independence immediately after World War II. Most of these countries had been dominated by Britain, France, Portugal and other Western European countries.

The institutions and the value system in these countries were a queer mixture of transplanted western values and an inherited oriental value system. The former dominated the elite class of these countries and the latter represented the predominant part of the life of the majority. Economically, politically and militarily, these nations were very weak. They depended significantly on trade with the advanced countries of the world where their primary products were sold and in return they obtained from the advanced countries manufactured goods to meet their necessities of life.

Immediately after their independence, these countries wanted to emulate their masters and transform their society into an industrial one. This resulted in generating social tensions in these societies. Thirdly, the emergence of Communist China on the one hand, and India as a free democratic country based on the

parliamentary system on the other hand, presented two ways of life and political leadership.

This in a nut-shell is the background in which the two super powers of the world have been competing with each other either to increase their sphere of influnce or to win over the countries to their way of life and turn them into their political satellites. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that after World War II, the scene of super power competition shifts to Asia. This does not mean that World War II had no impact on the European countries, but it only attempts to suggest that the balance of power equation and the armament race had frozen the situation in Europe in a bipolar balance of power.

But in Asia, on the other hand, the emergence of Communist China and a group of non-aligned nations under the leadership of Prime Minister Nehru and President Nasser had led to the creation of a situation where the rigidity of bipolarity gradually gave way to an emerging multipolar world.

The other factors contributing to this super power rivalry were the withdrawal of the British from the East of Suez and the predominant American view to contain communism by bringing about military pacts with the countries around Russia and China and the Soviet attempt to frustrate American efforts. Thus, it would seem that the problem of an Asian balance of power was essentially a western and not an Asian idea.

According to Royama, when Japan was gradually permitted to resume her normal relations with other nations in the period preceding the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, the cold war had already firmly established itself in Asia and Japan had entered into a security treaty with the United States which set forth the basic structure for the maintenance of Japan's national security. In terms of economic capacity today, Japan can afford to spend huge sums of money on defence and armaments and can even build up a viable nuclear force but, according to the author, this she cannot afford to do as the attitude of the people is contra the armament race. The attitude of the Japanese people towards the problem of national defence is uniquely legalistic and sentimental, not strategic and realistic.

The political parties have been developing a variety of policies towards the problem of over-all national security arrangements. There are basically three positions:

- Maintaining the present arrangements provided for by the security treaty,
- ii) Conditional acceptance of collective security arrangements, and
- iii) Abrogation of the treaty.

The Government's position today is in favour of the automatic extension of the treaty and, according to the author, in view of the general political and psychological climate in Japan, it would be unwise to spur on a political row by taking any positive action on this issue. With respect to non-proliferation, the Japanese Government now seems to accept the fundamental desirability of a treaty to prevent further nuclear proliferation. Although it is still pleading for certain principles to be recognised in a non-proliferation treaty, the Japanese attitude towards China and her objectives is that Chinese nuclear capability may not pose a direct threat to Japanese security, but it could be used as an instrument of blackmail.

The author ultimately concludes that so far as Japan's defence against a nuclear threat is concerned, there is no worthwhile alternative to continued reliance on America's nuclear umbrella, if Japan's political stability is to be maintained. In the fast changing Asian scene, it is difficult to imagine how long this attitude would continue to dominate Japanese thinking. He also concludes that the hasty intervention in Asian affairs by outside powers tends to aggravate rather than improve the situation, and he is also not sure whether there is any 'Asian' solution to this problem.

The author mentions China and its role vis-a-vis the other two super powers, but he fails to mention the role of non-aligned nations, particularly that of India in establishing a new equation of balance of power. He is also not able to see the future changing scenario of the Asian drama.

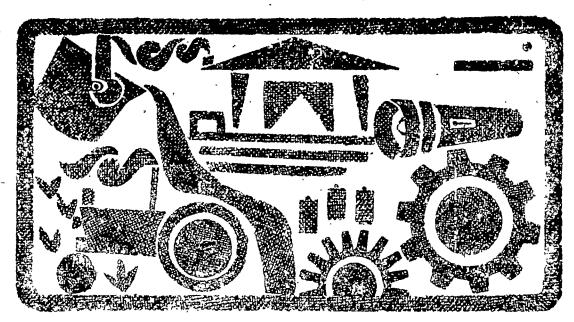
According to Bell, the phrase 'Asian balance of power' might be construed to mean either a balance of power intended to restrain any overweening ambitions in Asia or a balance of power confined to Asian studies. However, one is rather surprised to find that throughout his paper he has not talked of the role of the majority of the Asian countries. But he devotes considerable space to discuss the super power rivalry in the historical context and the views of McNamara in crystalizing the American concept of Asian security and America's role.

Bell states that the American policy of containing communism through military alliances and pacts as well as building bases abroad has been a high cost strategy and may not be that effective either. Bell feels that a balance of power policy can be effectively pursued only if the leader of an alliance would agree to define the common interest in a fashion consonant with the other members' definitions of their perspective national interests. Further, these definitions must take into account not only the estimated benefit to the national security of each country concerned, but the level of cost for this extra protection, and the national decisions must have a bearing on cost effectiveness.

It is important to note here that in manipulation of this policy, the Americans have always tried to present their own national interest as the national interest of the Asian countries. It is in the establishment of this identity that they create tensions in the Asian society, which is, by and large, responsible for the problems of an Asian balance of power. It must also be remembered that the Asian countries do not represent a monolithic society. Its constituent societies, perhaps, differ more radically from each other than developed societies do. In addition, there is a factor



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of emerging nationalism in these countries which is not taken into account. Bell appears to plead for the construction of a balance of power coalition through a constructive interaction of the super powers and he feels that, unless these powers unite, there is a danger that the Asian countries may step into a race for nuclear armament. This would particularly be true for India and Japan as China has already entered the nuclear club.

Subrahmanyam presents an Indian view on the problems of an Asian balance of power in the 70s. He begins by describing two images of China and China's outlay on the weapons development programme; Chinese nuclear capability and China's economic development. He also gives in brief the Indian economic development programmes; defence efforts; automatic power programme and India's nuclear debate. He pleads for a larger outlay on the weapons development programme and integrated R & D programme for defence and civil industrial development. According to him, China's nuclear development is basically motivated to deter an American nuclear attack on China and is a weapon of nuclear threat to Asian countries—an instrument of blackmail.

Any wrong move, according to him, could at any stage compel India and Japan to acquire nuclear weapons. In that case, China would be the one country in the world to be surrounded by unfriendly nuclear powers on all sides. This may compel China to reorient her policies towards her Asian neighbours and, thus, create a climate where the problems of an Asian balance could be tackled by the Asians themselves. The author feels that Japan's attitude towards China and her role in East Asia are very complex. He feels, along with Royama, that Japan will have to continue her security relationship with the United States, but this would not prevent her from developing strong economic ties with China.

It need hardly be mentioned that in the economic sphere in particular and the political sphere in general, Japan has started playing an increasingly significant role in East Asia. This could lead to the creation of a new set of Asian regional co-operation programmes and schemes which in the long run may dilute the influence of the super powers. The author discusses the role of Indonesia, Pakistan and other small nations and rightly concludes that their capability to play a major role is restricted by their internal involvement and border problems; (e.g., the Pakistan-India-Kashmir issue).

In the end, the author visualizes a multi-polar Asia with India and Japan playing the leading roles. He feels that the threat from China is essentially a political one and has, therefore, to be met by counterpolitical and economic measures. This seems to be the trend of events in Asia.

The events of 1971-72 have brought to the fore a great role for India in so far as the political and economic stability of her immediate neighbours like Pakistan, Nepal, Ceylon and Burma are concerned. If the anticipated summit between Indira Gandhi and

Bhutto could bring about a lasting solution to the problems of India and Pakistan, then India's role in the Asian balance of power would be very significant. Then these Asian countries would be able to evolve a new equation of a balance of power in Asia, with very little interference from the super powers.

K. D. Sharma

THE CHALLENGE OF WORLD POLITICS IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA by Werner

Levi, Prentice Hall. Inc., 1968.

The interaction of the States of South and Southeast Asia among themselves and with the major powers of the world, forms the focus of Werner Levi's book, The Challenge of World Politics in South and Southeast Asia. The book is really a collection of essays. The first essay, on the elitist nature of foreign policies, provides interesting reading. Levi describes the elite groups who dominate the decision making apparatus in the field of international relations and their changing perceptions towards the international system.

Having gained independence, reform of the international system, especially its class structure, became an important objective of the statesmen of the various States. Issues such as colonialism commanded strong support. The idea of 'power politics' or a system based on the concept of balance of power was repugnant to them. Instead, they postulated a system where power would be dispersed among the international community thereby 'extending the noncommitted area of the world', as the Belgrade Declaration put it. Most of the States of this region refused to become part of the blocs and alliance system and instead chose the path of non-alignment. The slogans of Asian solidarity, regional co-operation echoed throughout the region.

This mood of euphoria which had marked the early post-independence period gradually gave way to disillusionment. The efforts to create a better world through international co-operation on a supranational level became a casualty of the intransigence of the international system. Levi argues that gradually the behaviour of the new States of South and Southeast Asia moved from elation to considerable pragmatism and sobriety and their outlook and policies reflected existing traditional practices and behaviour. Or as Levi puts it, their sense of idealism was replaced by a sense of realism. Soon tensions developed and the divisive effects of incompatible interests and feelings were felt in the region. Levi's essay 'Tensions and Conflicts' traces the reasons for this conflagration in the region and the role of the major powers in exploiting existing tensions and disputes. In his treatment of nationalism, Levi argues that nationalist fervour was limited to the elite and a section of urban dwellers which formed a small minority of the population. Levi argues that the international problem posed by a lack of mass nationalism was the internal weakness and instability in the new States. Unfortunately, the subject is superficially dealt with and is

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probably a result of Levi's lack of understanding of the roots of nationalism in the West.

The essay on regionalism documents the various efforts made by the statesmen of the South and Southeast Asian States to achieve the objective of a regional organization. Levi argues that there was not enough pressure for such an organization. The Bandung Conference marks the climax of the effort. The only success came in 1967 with the emergence of a geographically limited economic pact called the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

By and large, Levi's book is interesting. However, some of Levi's judgments and interpretations are astonishing and need commenting upon. Firstly, as regards his understanding of the concept of neocolonialism, Levi is very sceptical. He is generous enough to concede that 'historically, neocolonialism was not without factual foundation'. However, he goes on to say: 'But in South and Southeast Asia the idea rested on suspicion and fear—Much of the time neocolonialism did not therefore describe an international situation, but rather expressed a set of evaluative assumptions. Its roots were more in the psychology of some Asian statesmen than in the objective contemporary reality.' (pp. 159-160. Emphasis added).

Levi's understanding of economic 'aid' from the developed to the less developed countries betrays the same 'naivete. He states that 'Asian recipients feared the possibility that American aid might be exploitative, or subvert 'true' independence—(and) reflected the strong influence of socialist thinking on many Asian leaders and contributed greatly to bringing American motives under suspicion'. (p. 181) Obviously, Levi has made no effort to read some of the contemporary literature on the subject. The fact is that western capital is deriving economic benefits at the expense of the less developed world. The factor of reverse flows finds no mention in Levi's simplistic notion of aid.

As for suspecting American motives in granting aid, the less developed countries are on strong ground. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) has served as a front for CIA activities and has been exposed in Laos. (Times of India, April 24, 1972).

Levi's understanding of Chinese ambitions and foreign policy is rather facile. The theme of subversion through local communist parties, ostensibly in close contact with Peking, and Chinese minorities in the States of Southeast Asia, finds in him a sympathetic audience. Thus, Levi states: 'The Chinese could heighten these fears by means which the U.S. and Soviet Union lacked'. He further states that 'The United States had no comparable instrument of policy. Nevertheless in the eyes of many Asian policy makers official American support of certain governments or political leaders was judged as an indirect form of domination—support of 'unpopular' or 'totalitarian' governments in Asia was criticised as a manifestation of American neocolonialism...(the) bombing of the

Ho Chi-Minh trail were taken as evidence of American imperialism' (p. 178).

Werner Levi forgets that CIA agents brought down governments in Iran (to benefit U.S. oil companies?) and Guatemala, the abortive U.S. sponsored invasion of Cuba in 1961, the landing of U.S. Marines in Lebanon, U.S. military intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 to rescue a repressive military establishment from an apparently successful popular revolt that was trying to restore constitutional rule, the role of United States in the reign of terror that has claimed several thousands of lives in Guatemala since 1967. As for the U.S. war in Indo-China, the less said the better. Levi's claim that though the Asian leaders are critical of both the U.S. and China. that they actually prefer the U.S. may be true. Indeed, regional elites need protection—to defend themselves against their own people and their fear of China perhaps stems from her successful revolution. Indeed, China may have certain means which the U.S. may lack. It would be very difficult to find Chinese equivalents of U.S. actions mentioned above.

Tejbir Singh

INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND THE GREAT POWERS

by William J. Barnds, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1972.

As the so-called under-developed world moves into more complex phases of economic, political and social development, the research and analysis on these areas by the experts of the West begins to show grave deficiencies. Whether it is the inspired sponsorship or the mechanical methodology, or both, that vitiates western understanding of events in Asia, Africa and Latin America, it is difficult to say. Of late, in South Asia we have come to realise how puerile some of the critical reasoning in the USA is on developments around us. Obviously, its roots cannot be uncovered easily, but every now and then something is published which throws light on how these attitudes develop. The book under review is interesting from this point of view.

The sponsorship is impressive: the Council of Foreign Relations. A distinguised team of South Asia experts have offered advice, comments and suggestions. The author, none other than William J. Barnds who worked in the office of National Estimates of the CIA from 1952-66, where 'we tried to understand what was happening in other countries, to assess what the future held for them and to suggest what this meant for the United States'. Clearly, this work contains the essence of what Barnds researched and analysed while in the CIA, for he turned to South Asian affairs after being an analyst of developments in the Soviet bloc.

The book, divided into four parts, attempts a potted history of the international tangles of the region and puts a stress on the relationships of the key States—India, Pakistan, China, the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. However, what emerges is a rather

stereotyped account of Indo-Pak tensions into which a reluctant U.S.A. and a scheming U.S.S.R. get involved. China, too, is there, but playing the game of a knave. In other words, it is the tension generated by the traditional Hindu-Muslim collision which drags the 'great powers' in, and not the other way around—the great powers intervening for their power reasons to keep the sub-continent divided and confused.

Of course, Barnds is in trouble. His book goes to the publishers in the autumn of 1971. Bangladesh, the majority area of Pakistan, has risen in revolt. The author is unable to introduce this traumatic event solidly into the text. Bangladesh is there in the background, but it remains in the background. Clearly, Barnds did not believe, like the bulk of U.S. Asia experts, that Pakistan would be halved in size by the end of 1971 and that the Pakistan military machine, so carefully nurtured by successive U.S. Administrations would lie shattered. As Barnds says, 'no author wants his work immediately to be overtaken by unforeseen events....'. Surely, the very basis of a new study on South Asia was Bangladesh.

Yes, the book has been overtaken by events—and rather drastically. But it is of interest because it reveals the basic flaws in U.S. thinking on India and Pakistan—for that is what it is about despite its somewhat misleading title. It would be a dreary exercise to range over the entire field, but critical errors need highlighting.

- * The U.S.A., like other western nations, sees the history of the last 100 years through British eyes—and, therefore, fails to realise the disaster that would have been sparked in India for the minorities if the Two-Nation Theory, at the root of Pakistan, had been accepted. And where is the theory today with the rise of Bangladesh?
- * Jawaharlal Nehru continues to be described in terms which suggest that he was some sort of naive communist sympathiser. How ridiculous can expertise become when Nehru's remarkable attempt to formulate the national interests of India are reduced to such a level of discussion. There is a persistent refusal to view the world as it appears from Delhi—and the result is no enlightenment.
- * The complexity of India's internal economic, political and social challenge is barely understood. Poverty and political consciousness are so intense—even more than in China where autocratic power prevails. To impact this poverty in democracy creates its own problems. A refusal to face the raw realities of a multicultural, multi-national polity build the passions which give birth to rebel nations a la Bangladesh.
- * Pakistan was seen in the traditional sense as a base. It will continue to be seen as a base, and the policies of polarisation will be sponsored by this or that outside power, unless the continent is viewed essentially as an entity which should

- not be disturbed. India, Bangladesh and Pakistan face this challenge very much more sharply now, and, significantly, the attempt to create dissension intensifies. Forgotten is the fact that Pakistan is so reduced that it can no longer be a threat to India.
- * The Soviet Union continues to be presented as the main enemy to 'democratic' interests in South Asia. China's role is not understood—China seeking unchallenged leadership in Asia, China playing skilfully somehow to find a base on the Indian Ocean (maybe, in the 'soft' tribal area of East India, Burma and Bangladesh!), China disturbed by the growing consolidation of India's 'fragile' unity and its friendship with the U.S.S.R.
- * Even Pakistan's present worries, about how military aid will intensify the break-up between the dominant Punjabi, the rebellious Pathan and Baluchi and the suspicious Sindhi, are not discussed in depth. Old habits die hard, and Pakistan will continue for some time to be seen as a manipulatable base.
- * Nehru's passion to build Asian security on a healthy understanding between India and China is lost sight of in the usual superficialities about the 1962 NEFA clash. No understanding is projected about the minor scale of the clash, the fact that the bulk of India's limited military potential remained committed along the Kashmir front against a Pakistani army equipped by the U.S.A. is not mentioned, and no attempt is made to explain the crucial error in Indian calculations, namely, Khrushchev's incapacity to influence the men in Peking. And for these reasons no understanding emerges of the new balance of power.
- * Of course, there is a deliberate ignoring of the peripheral States of South Asia—Afghanistan, the Himalayan Kingdoms, Burma, Ceylon, and the Indian Ocean islands. It is difficult to justify this. In a phase of development, when the subcontinent will attempt further consolidation, these peripheral States will assume great importance as the 'outsiders' move in to build pressures and new type bases against the sub-continent. Here, again, the old framework vitiates thinking.
- * The impact of the new power balance in South Asia on the situation in S.E. Asia is not really sketched. And this finally closes the eyes to the anger that is building in Asia generally against the outside powers and their cynical intrigues.

What Barnds has given us is, in fact, an apologia for the U.S. State Department's bankruptcy in South Asia. He has marginal criticisms and marginal suggestions to make. It is a book that makes you sad, not angry. That's the trouble. The total thesis is a competent scissor-and-paste job at which western scholarship now excels. For analysis in depth, we will have to look elsewhere.

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India's Green Revolution

Economic Gains and Political Costs

FRANCINE R. FRANKEL

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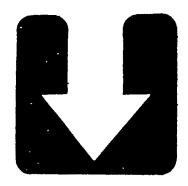
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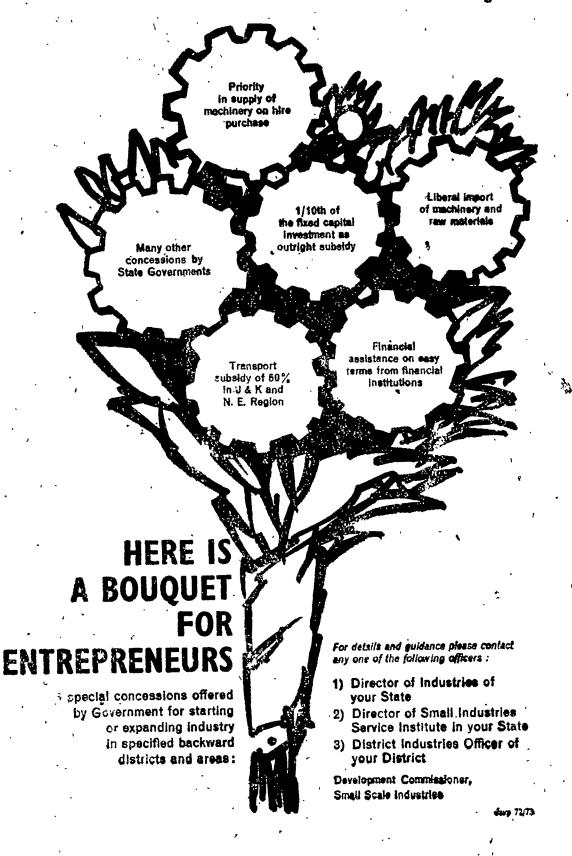
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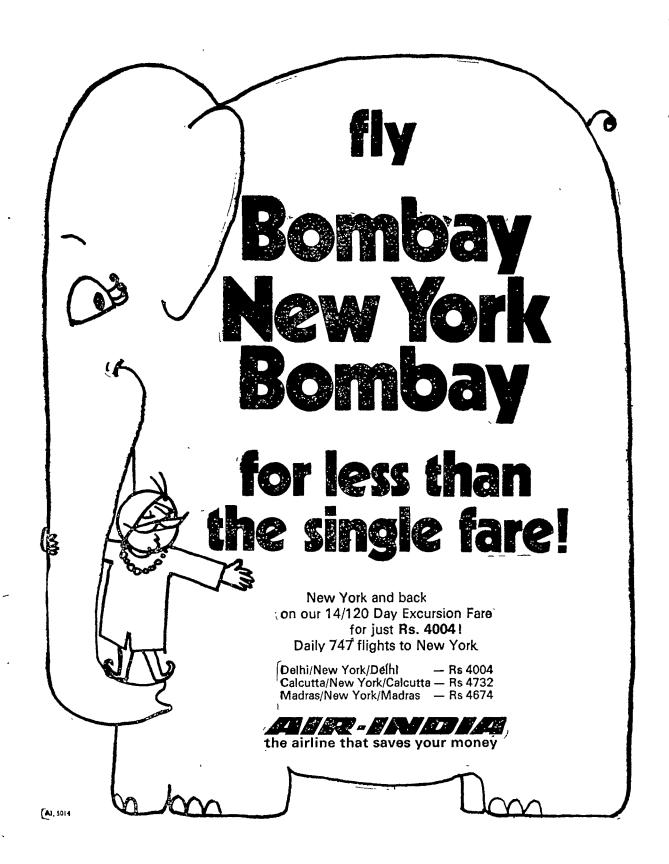
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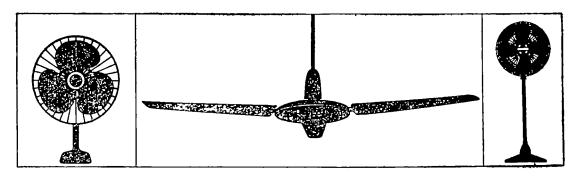


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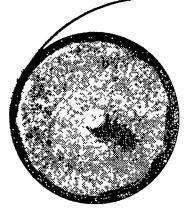


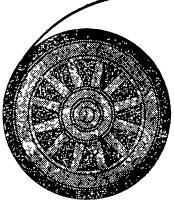


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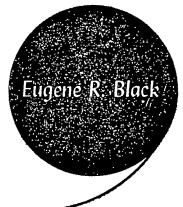
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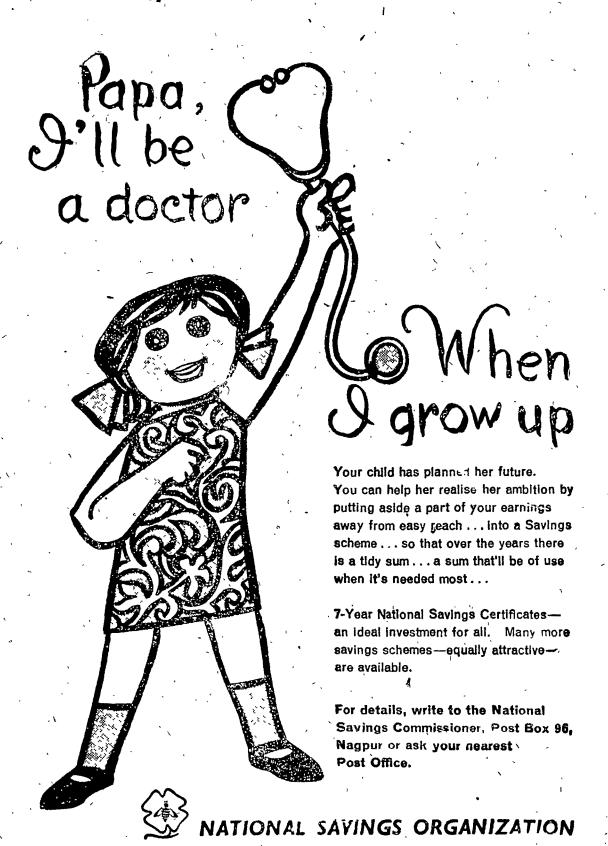


Development is proceeding in spite of the cultural attitudes, social institutions and political conflicts which sometimes seem to be such immovable barriers. It is not a smooth, uninterrupted progression, to be sure; rather, growth appears more as a series of fits and starts. "And yet," as Galileo is supposed to have said, "it moves!"





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Published from Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi-1. Telephone: 46534. Cable Address: Seminar, New Delhi. Single copy: 1 N. pence; 70 cents (\$). Yearly Rs. 20; £2.15; \$6. Three Yearly: Rs. 50; £7.10; \$16. Reproduction of material prohibited unless pern

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COVER

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The problem

IS there an Indian system? Is there an 'ideal structure' which would provide the rationale for the great Indian society? Some think that the nation in its subconscious is still trying to realise this dream. For, we could not have broken the shackles of slavery and risen from the ruins of history without a dream. Despite what the critics have to say about our political potential, the system which was germane to the rationale of the freedom movement in India still provides the main thrust to her destiny.

The ideal we are looking for consists of a package of four: a composite culture of secularism, non-violence, socialism and a decentralised democracy. Secularism provides the *elan vital* of the system, decentralisation the base, non-violence the lever and socialism the goal. The ideal is, in other words, built on the solid rock of decentralisation. Decentralisation provides the base, and once the base is built the entire structure comes the easy way. But not viceversa. The Indian system has, therefore, not yet taken a shape.

Socialism still remains a far cry. The country, especially its eastern wing, has been choked with violence and lawlessness, and the entire nation is in a way weary of its trials and unable to realise its objectives even after two decades of freedom; and only because we have gone the wrong way. In other words, the Indian system can come into its own if and when we forget the western political maxim that 'modernization' must first lead to 'centralisation'. We have to put 'decentralisation' at the centre of the stage. We have to give it all the priority—and work towards the realisation of the total 'system' from the vantage ground of a decentralised democracy.

But what does 'decentralisation' really mean? A difficult question. For, one must not only

find its definition but be able also to operationalise the concept in the light of the immediate tasks before us. There is, however, a feeling that the answer to the question is now available and it has come to us in an unequivocal manner from two significant events of contemporary history, namely the developments in Bangladesh and the new political system introduced in Yugoslavia. While both these have important lessons to convey, they do not provide the talisman. India will have to strive and find her own path the hard way. Some raw thinking on this matter and some straight talking will help. That is the purpose of this paper.

No country's history can be a page borrowed from any other's and every nation has to find its own 'formulae' of development, rather than try to fit in with the 'prisms' of other's experiences, be they of a Mao, a Mujib or a Tito. The goals of India's decentralisation are distinctly different. Decentralisation will be, when it comes, the product of India's culture and history and a contribution of her ecology, geography, economic needs and aspirations. Unlike the kindred movements of any other parts of the world. India's cry for decentralisation is not only to be based on a territorial or sub-national redistribution of political power but on the edifices of individual freedom. To usher in a new system which would give the maximum scope for individual development is its goal.

The cry for decentralisation in India is thus not for a mere transfer of power from one principality to a few others, from the metropolitan town of Delhi to the eighteen provincial capitals, from a group of political elites to many more. The search is for freedom, one that would give every Indian or community—however insignificant its size—a share in the decision-making process of the country and provide every group of citizens the wherewithal for self-actualisation. It must help, therefore, the fullest

realisation of every man's dormant potentialities for economic growth and social development, every man in this context meaning specially those who carry on somehow in the backward areas of the country. The poor and the weak who do not form a part of the elite system are covered by the term. The new order will have to be especially tailored to give them a role.

As the saying goes, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The Indian movement for decentralisation should seek to strengthen all links which are weak today. It does not, therefore, seek to make India a disintegrated entity and a loose, imping confederation. Its aim is to develop every 'societal unit' of the country into a bastion of strength. The goal is not merely to distribute the 'booty' of the political system (one that holds most of the nation to ransom and is now monopolised by a small elite which sits in Delhi and commands others who reside in Lucknow, Calcutta, Gauhati or Madras) but to bring in a new system of social organisation which will make India an immeasurably stronger nation.

The point can be best illustrated by providing a critique of the prevailing concept of decentralisation so well epitomised by the Rajamannar Committee Report. Despite the many and timely suggestions that it offers, the committee's main task seems to have been to attempt to erode the Indian Parliament of its present power and status. This it seeks to achieve in two ways. First, there is the suggestion that substantial powers be transferred from Delhi to the States. The committee then envisages a different basis for the functioning of the federal set-up, a role-transference in which a State elite would replace the national, now represented by Parliament in all matters of crucial decision. Accordingly, it calls for a shift of power from the Central Cabinet to an Inter-State Council, to a permanent Finance Commission appointed at the Centre with the representatives of the States and to a statutory Planning Commission which will no longer be responsible to the Cabinet.

While the Committee takes away a great deal of power from Parliament and vests it in a number of new institutions, it also strengthens the office of the Governor. He shall deal directly with the President and the latter with the former. The Prime Minister's office is also strengthened. It will, if the Rajamannar Committee has its way, be on its own. For, no other colleague of the Prime Minister, no representative of Parliament, not even a minister shall be a member of the Inter-State Council.

The whole scheme is not so much an onslaught against the forces of centralisation as a plea for the shift of power from Parliament which, in the context of the internal polity of the country, is sought to be turned into a semi-sovereign body. By enhancing the importance of the Prime Minister, by strengthening the office of the President, by replacing a national elite which the Parliament represents with a series of new institutions, the degree of centralisation is surely not diminished. What changes is only the emphasis in the scheme of centralisation. To the extent power is now concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister who would no longer rule with the help of a national elite but with the elites of the States, the Rajamannar Committees seeks to move towards a new set-up opting probably for a system of government which will be more presidential in form. The initial criticism that Gandhi 1 had put forward about the Indian Constitution holds good about the report of the Rajamannar Com-

 ^{&#}x27;The centre of power is in New Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages in India.'

⁽M.K. Gandhi quoted in 'Panchayati Raj as the Basis of Indian Polity', AVARD, New Delhi, p. 16)

mittee. The mere fact that power is transferred to a different machinery and to a new set of elites drawn from the States does not alter the character of the system.

This is no decentralisation. Those who think otherwise fail to distinguish the concept from two others, namely, deconcentration and dispersal. Decentralisation is a different theme. It is a new concept and calls for a redefinition of the traditional approach to the problems of power, profit and motivation as also to governments, economic systems and social organisations.

Economic decentralisation, for example, so vital to the theme, does not merely mean a dispersal of the big nationalized monoliths. Neither will it mean that the power to establish certain industries. Questions of technology, forms of in the latter. While there can be no 'decentralisation' without supportive economic planning, the latter is to be based on a thorough reexamination of the 'size' and the 'structure' of industries. Questions of technology, forms of ownership, baskets of goods produced and the 'mix' of production will all have to be similarly taken into consideration.

The purpose of economic decentralisation is thus to ensure that any pair of hands gets a fulltime, productive and adequately remunerative occupation. This is to be guaranteed not so much by the big establishments run by the alienated bureaucrats, be it those of the Centre or of the States, but by providing opportunities in cottages and farms to all those who cannot and should not move to the sprawling megalopolises. The reconstruction of economic life through the small township and urban patterns of habitat and expanded villages, developments of a new category of 'owner workers and consumers' to whom the commanding heights of the economy are to be transferred and not merely to a provincial elite, is to provide the basis of economic decentralisation. Any scheme of decentralisation that does not visualise such changes will not do. A measure of development and growth in such an economy will not be just the G.N.P. or the per capita statistics, but the rate at which the weakest sections grow and catch up with the economic oligarchs however dispersed may be the latter's places of residence.

Political decentralisation needs similarly to keep Gandhi's Talisman² in view. It is not sufficient, therefore, that power is transferred to the

Gandhi to N.K Bose, 1946

eighteen principalities of India ruled by thirteen dominant sub-cultures. The transfer of power must, on the other hand, be effective to the weaker sections and backward groups in each of these States. Decentralisation has also to give them the right to self-determination. In West Bengal, for example, one can plead the cases for those who remain under the perpetual domination of the upper caste Hindu Bengalee elite, such as the Santals and the Nepalese of Darjeeling as well as the Muslims and the backward castes in general. In U.P. the western wing's hegemony over the eastern, of the Sanskritised culture over the Bhojpuri and the Maithili are clear. So also are the control of the hill regions in Assam by the Assamese in the area.

Administration, when decentralised, will thus have to be responsible to a great many people and especially to all such suppressed or backward groups. It must give them the wherewithal for the attainment of their human and cultural rights. That would not only mean then a dispersal of power from one capital to another, but to a total inversion of the political pyramid.

A series of new governments, beyond the Capital, will then come into being. A concentric circle of governments of villages, sub-divisions and districts over and above those of the States and the Centre will provide the pattern. All residuary powers will belong to the immediate lower units, and each of these governments would have a list of subjects of their own given to them by the constitution of the country.

The package of the various governments shall be the government of the country. Weaker sections, minorities, villages, religious, ethnic and linguistic groups in each of the States should thus by the maturity of their activity find the fullest scope for participation in the decision-making process at every tier of the government in an effective manner. Such a political structure will draw substance from the base. Power evolves from there and does not devolve from the top. The aim is not one of decentralisation and delegation but of the generation of a sharper foci of power nearer the level of the ground, where the ordinary, apolitical, unorganised individuals and families dwell.

In terms of spatial control over the political process the emphasis will have to shift to the rural from the dysfunctional urban units, as also from the central area, be it of the nation or of a State to the 'periphery'. The main contention is that power is to be divided not only between the nation's Capital and the States, but is to be equitably shared with a number of political organisations located in the interior, in the most distant areas and in the hinterland. These organisations will be controlled not only by the progressive, modern representatives of the majority community but also by those who are poor,

^{2. &#}x27;Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test: Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry or spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and self melting away'

backward and who are likely to ever remain in the minority.

A certain typology of a semi-Brahmanic class rules the North today and a non-Brahmanic one rules the South. Power on the whole belongs to those who live in the plains, are English-veducated and originate from the Hindu upper and middle class caste structure. A stereotype of language, food, mode of dress, craftmanship and culture dominates every State of India and provides opportunities for self-expression and development to some people everywhere. It leaves out a great many and probably the majority from its purview. They stand muzzled and mutilated in the process, and are forlorn and lost

The other matter of importance is a shift towards a new form of politico-cultural cooper ation. After years of turmoil, infighting and violence within the elite of the nation, a virtual agreement has been arrived at for a sociopolitical truce among the major cultural, ethnic and religious groups of India. A political coalition for co-existence, which represents the main elite game of power in India, naturally leaves a great many people out of the game. But what is worse is that it also leads to a definite alienation of the political elites of the different subcultures from each other, as also from the entity called India. The cases of the DMK and of the new BMK (as the CPI(M) in Bengal is sometimes called!) provide pointers in that direction.

The total picture that emerges is not encouraging. The elites of the Centre and the States are gathering more power today and, consequently, a great many, who stand at the periphery of the game, feel weak and weary. It has also led to much fragmentation of interests and loyalties and sometimes even blurred the image of the country. Neither has the process yielded a degree of self-determination for all.

This is not what we sought. It is certainly not decentralisation. Alienation or domination cannot be and has never been the mainstay of decentralisation, the latter being basically non-exploitative and integrative in function.

The politics of power, the economic activities for profit and a civil administration aimed at the over-organisation of life must begin to give way to service, cooperation and equity. What is wanted is an equal distribution of the total output of the system, economic, political and social, to all its clientele who together constitute the India of our dreams. The self-appointed mouthpiece of the people, namely the elite, be it of the nation or of the States, should not be the only beneficiary of the system. A decentralised form of government is necessarily non-elitist. It cannot be based on hatred or on alienation.

If the Rajamannar Committee does not do anything more than suggest the broadening of

the base of the power structure and gives only the State elite a greater measure of self-determination, it does place a challenge before the nation. That is the challenge of centralisation. The report shows that despite years of infructuous rule by a centralised polity and the public worship of its antonym, all that we are prepared to bring about is a different form and category of centralisation. Nothing more. A great merit of the report is its courage. That it initiates a bold and drastic scheme of reorganisation of the political structure of the country does provide a challenge to all those who have not yet done anything to disturb the status quo. That challenge should be welcome. The alternative that I have placed before the reader is not meant merely to provoke a discussion, but to provide a viable alternative to the contemplated scheme of hidden centralisation.

India should be divided into six regional States. Three in the North; one in the hills of the East; one embracing the area that lies between Ghazipur and Gauhati and the other in the West reaching up to Chandigarh. The fourth would comprise the whole of the central-western India. There will be two others in the South. In each of the regions the effective unit of government should be the district, the boundaries of the districts being redrawn on a culturaleconomic basis. There should also be specific distribution of powers and functions between villages, sub-divisions and districts on the one hand and between the 'region' and the Centre on the other. The new States will provide a sort of political cartel, with the districts forming completely autonomous subsidiaries. The latter will also be the units of political administration and planning. All residuary powers would belong to them with certain specific functions transferred to the States. The power that belongs to the governments of the sub-divisions and the villages will, to start with, devolve from the district, while the powers of the 'States' will evolve from the latter. The distribution of power between the Centre and the States will follow the pattern that obtains between the States and the district, each government keeping only such subjects to itself which the latter is most competent to administer. All controversial issues of national importance should be referred to Parliament to which individuals and not States would be represented, decisions affecting the districts being adopted by a simple majority vote. Each region will be multilingual and every region a miniature India. Every citizen will then face what is now dismissed as an all-India problem in his day-to-day life and not grope in the narrow groove of parochialism.

There was a time when the linguistic elites of the thirteen major groups were not placed on an equal footing and some did not have adequate opportunities for development as compared to the others who had certain initial advantages when British rule arrived in India. The former, therefore, needed assistance to catch up. That initial period of gestation being over, there seems to be no point then for the same political divisions to continue.

The creation of these States had once benefited a handful of elites in every culture area, and it was at that time certainly an historical step But the need is over and to continue the policy will not help us to grow politically or economically. It would serve no purpose, therefore, to transfer more powers to the very same elites and strengthen them. For, that would help only to undermine the nation's sub-cultures and small communities, and to strengthen an expanded oligarchy in every State of India at the cost of the weak.

My scheme comes in the wake of the fulfilment of this destiny of the linguistic elites of India. It is the third step, the most logical next move in the evolution of the politics and constitution of the country. That would give the nation's slaves, the men in waiting, a good long hand in the decision-making process—a matter which, I am afraid, brooks no delay.

The new system would guarantee autonomy to 300 groups of people or more, creating in its stride 300 and odd 'States' after the boundaries are redrawn. Some small and some large, all of them would be bound in one common cause of self-reliance and swaraj. Such a step would make each district a well-knit, integrated organisation. Being no longer the limb only of an unrecognised sub-culture, but part and parcel of a mini-nation, namely the new region States, they might well be in a position to halt the much dreaded process of 'alienation'.

No one should in such a scheme of things be in a minority anywhere and no one should be over-ruled all the time by a few who have come to represent the indestructible majority in every State of India. Each one, in a certain sense, will at the same time be in a minority somewhere and every group will have an opportunity to rule somewhere; all of them, all sub-cultures of India thus being integrated with the political responsibility of administering the country.

Such a scheme would at least help to erode the centres of political exploitation of their ruthless power. To the extent the new districts would develop their capitals and industries they would undermine the megalopolises and relieve the country from the strains and stresses of dysfunctional urbanism.

All social theories are dynamic in their application. So also is the theory of decentralisation. If once decentralisation had meant the dispersal of some of the key industries and

opportunities to the elites of the major linguistic groups to develop a sense of 'power' for them' selves, that phase is over. One must now move further; far to the interior, down to the bottom, and away from the centre to the periphery. More and more groups should come into their own. Not only need they have a feel of 'power' and responsibility, but also a feel of the country that is increasingly getting blurred. The time has come, therefore, when efforts to rescue a people from the new masters of 'States' and 'cultures' has become as important as their rescue from the despots of the nation. Any scheme of decentralisation must provide for this objective.

A question may now be raised about the 'zonal' tier of the government. Is it really necessary? Could we not just have 300 States, or say 100 or 55? The answer is clear. If there be numerous governments at the base and only one at the Centre, the chances are that the latter would grow despotic and ruthless, reducing all others to the status of municipalities. In case of a revolt stirred as a reaction to such a development, the small States would be completely alienated from the nation. A second tier providing a combination of political units and 'sub' subculture would meet that contingency. To the question whether such subdivision would not impair the vitality of the nation, the answer is 'no'. For it would certainly be more healthy to bring the new States into being by acceding to the clear 'logic' of the times rather than to wait for political pressures and violence to break up the present structure. The pressures have already led to the cry for small States and the politician, pushed about by the irresistable forces of events, only asks, 'How many?' or 'When will the process stop?'.

The process will certainly stop. But only when we have legitimatized the aspirations of all subcultural groups and freed them from domination of various kinds. The process will be smooth if the demands are conceded even before they are made.

Will it be possible to go back to a multilingual set-up, whatever its form? Why not? is my answer. There is every reason for autonomous units to combine for their own interests, if they are doing so as free, self-respecting units, for certain purposes of economy, unity and culture.

The new design will put decentralisation at the very base of our polity and lead to real secularization of the great 'Indian Society'. Much of the violence today is the function of the stiffing State structure. As the structure changes, and a true secular approach emerges, giving every group a position of legitimate power and control, violence will become dysfunctional. The system, the Indian system, with its own dimensions and perspectives will arise from its ashes

Two-way traffic

D'HARMA VIRA

THERE is much loose talk these days about the powers of the States vis-a-vis the Centre. The D.M.K. has raised the demand that the States should have the utmost autonomy and the Centre should retain powers only to look after defence, foreign affairs, communications, currency, central finance and such other items that may be absolutely

necessary for the integrity and safety of the country. In Bengal, when the United Front Government was in power in that State, more or less similar demands had been raised. To understand the problem properly, it would be desirable to have some idea of how the present Union of India came into being and what was the situation in the country

prior to the Union of India being formed.

If one looks at the history of India one finds that the country since times immemorial passed through recurrent stages of being Balkanised into small States, thereby having a disunited and weak structure followed by repeated efforts to unite the country into a strong entity. This was done by the creation of empires by kings and emperors. Whenever the country was united it grew prosperous and strong and earned the admiration and even the envy of other countries, but whenever the central power became weak, the country fell apart followed by disunion, chaos and disaster.

Before independence, the British united the country as had never been possible before. Then, India was divided into two parts, viz., British India which the Imperial Government ruled directly and Indian India which was ruled by the Indian Princes under the suzerainty of the British Government. British India was divided into a number of administrative units called provinces. These provinces were under the direct control of the Central Government presided over by the Viceroy in India and directed and controlled by the Secretary of State in London. The provinces were not States either in the true sense of the word or in any way at all. They were mere administrative divisions which had been created for the convenience of the administration of the country or historical, geographic relics which had got created in the process of the progress of British domination in India.

when India became independent, it evolved for itself a federal structure. The first action taken was to liquidate the Indian States and to integrate them into one undivided India. After the consolidation of the country as a whole, steps were taken to recarve the boundaries of the provinces which were for the first time called States, and in the recarving of the boundaries the linguistic basis was the guiding factor. Even the linguistic basis had a historical background in as much as the Indian National Congress had been demanding linguis-

tic States in the country for a long time.

One thing, however, is absolutely clear that the Indian Union is not a union of paramount States which had come together to form a union after shedding a certain part of their paramountcy. In fact, in the formation of the Indian Union a reverse process had taken place viz., that the Central Government had shed powers in favour of the States in order to enable them to discharge their functions under the Constitution effectively. The States, therefore, cannot complain that under the Indian Union they have lost powers or have been denied them. In fact, they are today exercising powers much in excess of anything they had at any time in the entire history of the country.

Under the Indian Constitution, the division of functions between the Centre and States has been made on a rational basis.

The Union or the Federal List comprises subjects of wide and general interest, such as defence, currency, taxation, communications, foreign affairs, etc., subjects which are necessary for the preservation of the integrity of the country from external as well as internal pressures and to give a prominent voice to the Centre in matters of all-India interest.

The State List relates to subjects of local importance, such as education, health, development activities, law and order, industries, etc. In matters contained in this list, the States have the fullest measure of autonomy.

The third list, viz., the Concurrent List, is intended to cover matters which are countrywide in character, of concern both to the States and the Centre, and in which from time to time, in the interest of uniformity of action, Central direction or even legislation is desirable.

Between these three lists is found the entire spectrum of legislative activity in the country. The basic fact, however, underlying it all is the necessity for a strong Central Government without any intention to diminish the States' power, initiative and progress provided the States function within the framework of the Constitution. The third list, viz., Concurrent List, it must be realized was intended to emphasize the need for cooperation, adjustment and accommodation between the Centre and the States and the States and States. Upon this cooperation, adjustment and accommendation alone depends the successful carrying out of functions and obligations under the Constitution not only for securing economic and social justice to the people of the land but also for preserving internal amity and maintaining external security.

The framers of the Constitution were also aware that sometimes disputes might arise between the Centre and the States and the States and States, and to resolve those disputes, specific provisions have been introduced in the Constitution.

During the twenty-five years of its existence, the Indian Constitution has passed through various tests and trials. When pre-Independence India was divided in 1947, between what is now called India and Pakistan, a number of pressing problems suddenly developed. The administrative structure of the country was greatly weakened by the departure of practically all the British element and also by the option of a number of members of the minority community to work in Pakistan.

The disturbances which follow ed the division of the country brought into India over nine million displaced persons and the problem of rehabilitating this unprecedentedly large population of displaced persons was in itself a stupendous one. The country as a whole was in a sorry state. Literacy was ten per cent, health services were poor, agriculture was in a state of disarray and the general economic condition of the masses was precarious.

The newly independent country had pledged itself to remove inequalities, to bring progress and prosperity and to eradicate all the evils of the past. All those were tasks which would have been immense even for well developed countries and much more for a country which had become newly independent.

On top of that, Pakistan forced a war on us in regard to Kashmir, and the task of liquidating the Indian States, which would have otherwise become ulcers in the body politic of India, had also to be undertaken. Since 1947, we have had three more wars with Pakistan and one with China.

The tasks of development and economic re-generation of the country are going apace. All these challenges have been tackled in the last twenty-five years by India under the present Constitution and thus the Constitution by the processes of actual tests and trials has shown that inherently it is sound.

We have even had what might be termed political upheavals. From 1967 onwards there have been developments in the political sphere which at one stage led many people to wonder whether we were wise in having a Constitution based on the Westminster type of parliamentary democracy. The instability generated in a number of States by defections and counter-defections of large numbers of legislators are still fresh in our mind and we do not know whether a similar situation might again develop in the country at a later stage.

Luckily, the people have shown that they have a greater sense of responsibility than their elected leaders and in the elections, during the last one and a quarter year, they have shown in an unmistakable manner that they do not approve of these goings on and that when there is a choice between instability and stability, they are clearly and positively in favour of stability.

What is, therefore, required today is not either an entire re-writing of the Constitution of the country or any drastic changes in it. During the twenty-five years of the existence of our Constitution, experience has shown that misunderstandings or strains between the States and the Centre mainly arise out of the following matters:

Law and Order; Resources; Industrial Development; The Role of the Governor; Settlement of disputes between the States;

the States and the States, and with the Centre.

Under the Constitution, even though the maintenance of law and order is a State responsibility, the Centre is required to safeguard the country from external aggression and internal disorder. Only a few years ago in Bengal, the Union Government had to send some units of the Central Reserve Police to that State for the maintenance of internal security. This was objected to by the then West Bengal Government. It should be possible to work out an arrangement wherein, whilst the States will generally be entirely responsible for the maintenance of law and order in their respective areas, the Centre in times of difficulties and in the interest of the integrity of the country would have the authority to take such steps as may be required.

In the matter of industrial development, a number of States expressed considerable have discontent at the regulation of development centrally industrial and the delays that the system causes. Naturally, they are all anxious to move as fast as possible in regard to industrialisation but, at the same time, it cannot be denied that it is the duty of the Central Government to ensure that industrial progress in the country is more or less uniform and regulated. Without such regulation and uniformity, much discontent and bad blood might be created amongst the States. The Central Government must prevent such a situation from developing.

Much misunderstanding has been created on the role of Governors in the States. Some States feel that the Governors are being utilised as agents of the Central Government to the detriment of the interests of the State. This feeling has got to be removed. In a

recent report, the committee of Governors has categorically asserted that the Governors have specific functions under the Constitution and are in no way agents either of the Centre or of the President. The problem is of translating this brave assertion into a reality. It should be possible to do so by the establishment of conventions and practices.

Much time is wasted in the settlement of disputes between the individual States and between the States and the Centre. The result of the delay is that positions crystallise and what could have been settled amicably if a settlement had been speedily organised, develops into a confrontation causing bad blood and even violence. The responsibility for the early settlement of disputes lies squarely on the Centre and the Centre should evolve a machinery whereby these disputes are settled speedily and do not develop into festering sores in the body politic of India.

Resources are the lubricant on which the machinery of govern-ment runs everywhere. The problem in India today is that whilst a considerable amount of work has to be done, the resources for them are woefully inadequate. Most of the items under which the States raise their resources have either been completely worked out or are inflexible, with the result that they have to depend heavily on the Central Government for additional resources. This causes much irritation because whenever the States go to the Centre for further resources, their requests are either received unsympathetically or they are recipients of sanctimonious lectures from the Central authorities on financial discipline and improvidence. Here again, it should be possible to work out an arrangement whereby the States can be ensured a fair share in the revenues of the country subject, of course, to the requirements of defence and integrity and proper administration of the country as a

Thus, it will be observed that these matters are those which do

require any constitutional amendment or drastic re-writing of the Constitution. As stated before, the entire structure of the Indian Union is based on a system of cooperation, adjustment and accommodation between the Centre and the States and between the States themselves. It is not that there are no provisions in the Constitution for setting up healthy conventions and practices to settle misunderstandings and disputes on all these matters. There are adequate provisions in the Constitution for settling them, provided there is full cooperation, goodwill and a spirit of give and take between the constituent parties.

No number of fresh provisions or re-writing of the Constitution will help if that spirit is lacking or is absent. This is, however, a two-way traffic.

ust as the States are expected to work with a sense of responsibility and cooperation, so is the Centre expected to function in a purely objective, impartial and democratic manner. No considerations other than the over-all interests of the country can or should be permitted to operate. The Centre, as the leader of the Constitution, has considerable responsibilities in the matter.

It would be very unfortunate indeed if faith in the impartiality and objectivity of the Centre is destroyed because that will endanger the very foundation of the structure of the Constitution. There is at present a certain amount of justifiable apprehension in the mind of the States that the Centre is steadily and deliberately encroaching on their powers and functions with a view to making them completely subservient to the Centre. This tendency has to be curbed and the States have to be allowed the fullest possible freedom within the four corners of the Constitution to discharge their obligations to the péople effective-

The Centre must realise that the lirst impact of people's require-

ments and demands falls on the States. The Centre in most matters is one degree removed from the people and it is, therefore, important that the States which have to bear the first impact of the needs and the aspirations of the people should have adequate powers as well as resources to satisfy them.

On the other hand, the States also have to work in a responsible manner. In a number of matters it is found that they have a tendency to become indisciplined and irresponsible. They spend money without regard to the availability of resources. There is a lot of waste and mis-management, a frittering away of the resources of the States and considerable disregard of priorities. All these deficiencies have got to be removed.

There can never be a one-way traffic in any matter if irritations and disputes are to be avoided and certainly a one-way traffic of behaviour in matters involving the progress and development of the country will be impracticable.

The few items of disputes and strain between the Centre and the States can be adjusted satisfactorily by evolving mutually acceptable conventions and practices. It is important that these conventions and practices should be evolved as soon as possible. But all talk of 'Decentralisation' with a view to weakening the Centre is irresponsible. Our past history is a sufficient warning against any movement to weaken the Centre.

Whenever the Centre has become weak, as we can see from repeated instances in our history, the country has fallen apart and this can never be allowed to happen again. We can do so only at considerable risk not only to our integrity but even to our independ-We have a number of ence. enemies on our frontiers who would be only too happy to see the dismemberment of this country and to see it destroyed. I have no doubt in my mind that nobody in this country would like our enemies to rejoice, and our country to suffer.

Four pillar state

MADHU LIMAYE

THE British rulers created in India a highly centralised State system which was qualitatively different from the centralised empires which arose in the long course of Indian history. Under the British Raj local communities declined; and ancient and historic political entities were thrown into a melting pot. There was scarcely an area of political and economic life which the Central bureaucracy did not dominate.

With the rise of Indian national consciousness, the demand for self-government rapidly gained ground. The British Government did everything in its power to stem this rising tide of nationalism by seeking to channelise it into constitutional paths.

From the very outset certain principles came to be accepted by the leaders of nationalist opinion in the country. They accepted the idea of a parliamentary form of government as well as the plan of a federal structure in which sovereignty would be shared by the government of all-India and by provincial governments.

The Muslim community, in particular, was frightened by the prospect of democratic rule in India; the fear was that the Muslims, who were the dominant power in large parts of Hindustan for centuries,

would be swamped by the more numerous Hindu community. However, the Muslims were in a majority in certain areas some of which had already been constituted into separate provinces, and others, they felt, could also be conveniently demarcated into distinct provinces. They wanted their majority status in these areas to be left undisturbed.

The Muslim leaders, therefore, sought to dilute the powers and status of the government of all-India in any future constitutional set-up. They became the champions of the cause of maximum provincial autonomy for the federating units. The nationalist leaders were in favour of a strong central government, no doubt, but they recognised that India was a vast country comprising various religious communities and linguistic and cultural groups. In order to preserve the fabric of Indian unity they tried on the one hand to meet the Muslim League demand for maximum provincial autonomy and, on the other, to satisfy the aspirations of the linguistic groups by conceding the principle of the reconstitution and regrouping of provinces on a linguistic basis.

From the Nehru Report to the resolution introduced in the Constituent Assembly, this was the general direction of Indian constitutional development. The Cabinet

Mission Plan under which this Constituent Assembly was originally set up was a culmination of the constitutional evolution of the previous fifty years. It sought to strike a balance between separatism and centralism. It envisaged a very limited centre of three subjects, viz., defence, foreign affairs and communications. Between the centre and the provinces it proposed another administrative tier, consisting of groups of provinces: one group embracing the provinces in the north-west; the second group bringing in its fold the north-eastern provinces; and the third group incorporating the rest of Hindustan.

This plan which was originally accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League could not be implemented because of acute differences which arose over the interpretation of the clauses relating to the creation of these three groups and the right of the provinces to opt out of the grouping. The breakdown of agreement on the Cabinet Mission Plan led to the break-up of the country and formation of two independent, sovereign States as successor States of the British Indian Empire.

The disruption of Indian unity completely changed the background against which the framers of the Constitution, sitting in the Constituent Assembly, approached their task. Partition had a traumatic effect on the whole of Hindustan. In their anxiety to preserve the unity of whatever was left of India the Congress leaders, encouraged by constitutional pundits and legal experts, sought completely to reverse the course of Indian constitutional development.

They became strong advocates of a centralised constitution, and, although they continued to pay formal homage to the federal principle, they in fact finalised a constitutional scheme which was federal in form but unitary in spirit. The unitary characteristics of the present Indian Constitution were in no way a logical culmination of past developments and thinking; this amounted to charting out a new course.

What is surprising is that not only the leaders of the Congress

Party in India but also the Muslim League leadership in Pakistan, which had laid so much stress on the federal principle and provincial autonomy in the past, brought about a complete constitutional revolution upon its assumption of power in the State of Pakistan. Even the confusing Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League of 1940 had spoken about grouping the territories in the north-west and north-east into 'autonomous' and 'independent' units, and yet, when Pakistan became a reality, the Muslim League proceeded to create not a loosely federated polity but a highly centralised State which made the Indian Constitution look vastly liberal and federal in comparison.

The first constitution of Pakistan was based on the federal principle in theory, but the ideas of democracy, responsible government, the distribution of power, the system of regular elections based on adult franchise, etc., were never given a trial in Pakistan. After the death of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the murder of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, power increasingly passed into the hands of the Punjabi ruling class. This ruling class was intimately connected with the armed forces, and the subsequent political evolution of Pakistan progressively assumed authoritarian and militaristic forms.

When constitutional government finally broke down, provincial units were dissolved and West Pakistan was transformed into a single administrative unit, with East Pakistan becoming the other wing of the State. Flying in the face of history and geography, Pakistani leaders sought to suppress the aspirations of the people of East Bengal. By constitutional trickery they sought to convert the 55% Bengali majority into a permanent minority. Even in West Pakistan, in which lived 45% of the population of the new State, the Punjabi element preponderated.

This over-centralisation led to a total eclipse of civil liberty, provincial autonomy and responsible government in Pakistan. It is therefore in this over-centralisation and authoritarianism that one can dis-

cover the seeds of the break-up of Pakistan as a united State—embracing both its western and eastern wings—as also of the current troubles in the truncated State.

Historically, geographically and culturally, the successor State of India was much more homogenous. While there were divisive forces, there were also strong trends which reinforced national unity. The creation of Pakistan and its policy of hostility and confrontation towards India gave a fillip to centralist thinking. The Constitution as it emerged from the Constituent Assembly not only provided for central intervention in the affairs of the provinces in a national emergency but made the Centre all-powerful and omnipotent even in normal times. Certainly, in the matter of distribution of legislative and financing powers, and also in the sphere of general administration, the constitution made possible the giving of directions to the State governments in a number of matters.

To the first federal constitution of the modern age, viz., the American Constitution, the idea of the federal government giving directions to the States is completely foreign. It would be considered totally inimical to the federal spirit in that country. Under our Constitution, the Centre can give directions to the States in the following matters:

- (1) to ensure due compliance with Union laws and existing law;
- (ii) to ensure that the exercise of the executive power of the State does not interfere with the exercise of the executive power of the Union;
- (iii) to secure the construction and maintenance of the means of communication of military importance by the State;
- (iv) to ensure the protection of railways within the State:
- (v) to give directives for the development of the Hindi language;
- (vi) to give directions to any State to observe the canons of financial propriety as may be specified in the directions

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during the proclamation of financial emergency;

- (vii) to issue directions for the reduction of salaries and allowances of all or any class of persons connected with the affairs of the Union, including the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts, during a proclamation of financial emergency,
- (viii) to give directions to a State as to the drawing up and execution of schemes specified in the direction deemed to be essential for the welfare of the scheduled tribes in the State.

The power to give these directions is backed by clear cut sanctions. The State governments can ignore these directions only at their peril. The specific article in the constitution, viz., Article 365, which deals with the consequences of failure to comply with these directions, says:

'Where a State has failed to comply with or to give effect to, any directions given in the exercise of the executive power of the Union under any of the provisions of this Constitution, it shall be lawful for the President to hold that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution'.

There is also the wide phrasing of Article 356 which empowers the Central Government, acting through the President, to intervene in the affairs of the States and even totally suspend the functioning of that part of the Constitution which relates to the States. The President can take over the government of the States and Parliament can assume to itself the legislative powers of the State legislatures.

In this respect the President, significantly, is not required to act only on the reports of the Governors. He can *suo moto* intervene and suspend whatever little autonomy the Constitution confers on the States.

The other centralist features of the Constitution are: emergency provisions which enable the government to suspend the enforcement of

fundamental rights and impose on the State governments the will of the Centre; the power of the Governor to reserve certain bills for the assent of the President, the appointment of Governors and High Court judges without the advice or consent of the States, etc.

Apart from the above constitutional provisions, the centralising tendency of our constitution is most evident in the distribution of legislative powers and financial resources between the Centre and the States. The whole scheme is weighted in favour of the Centre, making the States its client in every sense of the term.

The question of political decentralisation has always been viewed in traditional terms, that is to say in terms solely of the relationship between the Centre and the States. But the question of State autonomy is only one aspect of the question of decentralisation. The other aspect, and perhaps the more important aspect, relates to the powers and authority of local communities.

In our country there are lakhs of village communities which have come to be grouped in administrative units such as the community blocks and the districts. They are expected to play a major role in ending rural backwardness. The ever-growing cities and towns, too, are faced with enormous problems. In fact, it is these local communities and their governments which are called upon to assume major responsibility in the matter of providing services to their inhabitants.

Urban communities in Europe used to provide policing, lighting, fire fighting, sewers and thoroughfares. The rest of the services were provided by the sovereign State which was unitary in form in England.

In America it is the city which is not only providing all the traditional services of Europe but more. The city government in America, in addition to the traditional European services, provides free education for all, hospitals, mass transit, welfare housing and so on. In the US, this has been the field where the city

governments have always operated. It was neither the federal government nor the State Government which was expected to provide these services.

The powers and resources of the organs of local self-government such as the municipalities and municipal corporations on the one hand and village panchayats, panchayat samitis, and zilla parishads on the other are extremely limited in our country. Increasingly, people expect these local self-government bodies, which are very close to them and whose working they can easily comprehend, to provide all these services.

Even in the United States where there is a strong tradition of powerful and independent municipal government, the American Constitution does not define the powers and functions of these self-governing communities. The demand is growing there for a fundamental revision of the American Constitution, a revision of State and Municipal borders, a revision of the levels of sovereignty allowed to each community in the nation and a revision of the distribution of the nation's resources.

In India the need for such a fundamental revision of our constitutional arrangements is much more urgent. However, the DMK and the Marxist Communities and the Akalis, who are the most vocal advocates of the demand for provisional autonomy, have not done any thinking on the subject of decentralisation. For them, municipal and local governments as basic units in the scheme of a decentralised State simply do not exist.

Those observers who have watched the functioning of the local bodies from close quarters are aware of the seriousness of the problem. The local bodies and municipalities in India do not enjoy even the powers which the European municipalities have always enjoyed, not to speak of the much more powerful city governments in the USA. Chief Minister Karunanidhi and CPM leader Jyoti Basu are de centralists only in relation to the Central Government in Delhi, but in Calcutta and Madras they pre-

sent a centralist face towards their municipalities and zilla parishads.

The Indian Constitution speaks of three lists, the Union List, the State List and the Concurrent List. If decentralisation is to become a living reality and the expectations of the people from their local communities are to be satisfied, then the new constitutional arrangements must not only speak of reducing the powers of the Centre but they must also seek to delimit the powers of the States in relation to local bodies.

No new scheme of redistribution of powers and financial resources will succeed which does not take cognisance of the needs of the organs of local self-government. It is true that the Indian Constitution is semi-unitary in character, but it at least defines the powers of the States with some precision. So far as local bodies are concerned, they are merely creatures of the State legislatures, and, in the centrally administered areas, they have no separate constitutional existence of their own.

Just as the Centre can suspend a State government in certain circumstances, the Centre and the States can suspend the elected local bodies falling within their jurisdiction whenever they choose to do so. In every State, at any point of time, we find a large number of municipalities under suspension.

The Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act did not empower the State government to supercede the Corporation. So, the West Bengal Government promulgated an Ordinance to give itself this draconian power, and immediately used it to supercede the government of this great city! The Bombay Municipal Corpora-tion Act also does not provide for superceding the Corporation. And yet when the ruling party's Mayoral candidate was defeated, it did not hesitate to threaten supercession of the Corporation. In Delhi, too, local transport was taken out of the hands of the Municipality by the Centre!

The scheme of Panchayat Raj has not yet been properly implemented in several States. In most places the principle of indirect elections has been adopted in place of direct elections. In some States the principle of nomination vitiates the democratic process. In several States, the government officers dominate the proceedings of the local bodies not indirectly but quite openly under the protective umbrella of legal enactments.

In municipal corporations and municipalities, the Municipal Commissioners and Chief Officers pay scant regard to the wishes of the elected representatives. They treat them with utter contempt. We trust the people to elect their State and Central governments, but we do not trust them with governmental power at the level of their local communities

Bureaucratism at these lower but vital levels is a hangover from our colonial past. Democracy will remain a hot house plant so long as local governments are not freed from the stranglehold of bureaucratic control.

In any meaningful scheme of redistribution of powers and the reallocation of resources, local bodies must be given a lion's share to enable them to discharge their duties. Only then will they be able to fulfil the new responsibility a modern society and its economic growth inevitably put on them.

The semi-unitary character of the Indian political structure and the complete reversal of the previous constitutional evolution that it brought about was concealed in the first 20 years of independence by the predominance of a single political party at the Centre as well as in the States. The authority of the leadership of the Congress Party, during most of this period, was great thanks to the feeling that it had successfully led the country to freedom.

The conflicts between the Centre and the States caused by the lopsided character of the new constitutional relations and the increasing encroachment by the Union Government on the powers of the States were often expressed in these years in terms of internal debate and discussion within the Congress Party.

The abuse by the Governor of his powers and of the emergency provi-

sion of Article 356 by the Centre in Madras (1952) and in Kerala (1959), when C. Rajagopalachari was nominated to the Council without proper advice from a Council of Ministers enjoying a majority in the newly-elected Madras Assembly, and when the Communist Government in Kerala, which continued to enjoy majority support in the Assembly, was dismissed, came in for criticism, no doubt; but by and large the Centre-State controversies were contained within the organisational framework of the Congress.

Besides, the late Prime Minister Nehru let the State leaders and Chief Ministers have their way so long as he himself was allowed a free hand in the domain of foreign policy, planning and the like.

In 1967, the supremacy of the Congress Party came to an end. In several States, non-Congress governments came into existence and the question of Centre-State rela- X tions assumed a new urgency and importance. In actual practice no specific controversies arose between the State governments and the Centre; there was a general protest over the Centre's interference and loud demands for greater powers for the States. No Chief Minister, however, sought to formulate these issues or mature the latent conflict in such a way that it would become comprehensible to the common people.

The resentments crystallised somewhat around the powers of the Governors and the Centre's hidden hand in the summoning, proroguing and dissolving of assemblies, the making and unmaking of ministries, the dismissal of State governments (West Bengal 1967; Uttar Pradesh, 1970) and the imposition of President's Rule. Otherwise the discussion was largely abstract, academic and sterile.

The DMK used the slogan, for the most part, as a weapon of pressurising the Centre and keeping Tamilnadu's public opinion in line. The CPM very often talked about it to cover up the internal conflicts within the United Front and also to gain sympathy from the West Bengal electorate. Neither party sought to concretise the demand for

more powers to the States or make it a rallying point for a mass upsurge.

Recently, I pointedly asked Karunanidhi about the differences that have concretely arisen between the Centre and the State of Tamilnadu and all he could think of was (a) some controversy over the erection of an ancient Chola King's statue in the Tanjore temple and (b) his opposition to the Defence Department's erecting some structures on the land in its possession which the State wanted to be kept as open space.

The Socialists, who were pledged to the ideal of a four-pillar State, did nothing through the instrumentality of the governments in which they were partners, to prepare a blue print of decentralisation at the level of municipalities, zila parishads and panchayats, and to develop confrontation between the States and Centre over concrete issues. The people did not see anything tangible, anything concrete, which they could understand and grasp.

The appointment of the Rajamannar Committee, therefore, is considered to be a first step towards defining the demand for State autonomy in concrete terms. This Committee was set up in 1969 and submitted its Report in 1971.

The recommendations of the Rajamannar Committee on State autonomy are far from revolutionary. Just as the dead-weight of the Government of India Act has distorted. the perspective of our Constitution, similarly the Rajamannar Committee's Report seems to be inhibited by this document. It generally accepts the ambit of the provincial autonomy delimited and defined by the Government of India Act. As for defining the constitutional status and powers of local bodies, it is completely silent on this subject. The terms of reference did not mention the problem at all.

A more fundamental revision of the distribution of legislative powers between the Centre, the States, municipalities and zila parishads is called for.

In the Union List entries 7 (Defence industries), 24 (Highways);

32 (Union Property), 52 (Industries), 53 (Other inflammable liquids); 63, 64 (Institutions of National Importance etc) confers on Parliament itself the supreme power to define the scope of Union jurisdiction. It is necessary to lay down certain definite criteria for judging the national importance, so that in the case of encroachment by the Centre, the States can obtain redress in the court.

Railways and air services are listed as exclusively Union subjects. While it is understandable to give the Union overall regulatory power to determine the gauge and safety requirements, etc., why should the construction, maintenance and operation of all railways be vested in the Centre? Let the States be given power to construct and operate branch lines, say, of not more than 100 miles long within the State borders.

Similarly, why should the States not be allowed to build and maintain State aerodromes and operate services within the States? With regard to water transport also, it is necessary to give power to the States, not concurrent power, but exclusive power within a defined area.

With regard to the recommendation of the Rajamannar Committee regarding the revision of the three lists, most of these suggestions, I feel, are reasonable, and, if the recommendations are implemented, the heavens are not going to fall. Their suggestion that the residuary powers of legislation and taxation should be vested in the State legislatures is also not unreasonable.

After the Cripps negotiations, the Congress had passed a resolution (the famous August Resolution of 1942), which said that residuary powers shall belong to the States. Entry 97 in the Union List is, therefore, wholely contrary to the prefreedom commitments of the national movement.

Entry 5 in List 2 relates to the local bodies This entry is as follows:

'Local Government, that is to say, the constitution and powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, district boards, mining settlement authorities and other local authorities for the purpose of local self-government or village administration'.

This entry makes the local bodies creatures of the State legislature. This is wholly repugnant to the democratic spirit. The Constitution itself must provide a separate list for the municipal councils and district councils. Their powers should not depend upon the whims of the State legislatures. They should draw their powers to make regulations and impose taxes from the Constitution itself.

The functioning of the local bodies is not only vital to the life of the local communities; it also is much more comprehensible to them than the working of the Central and State governments.

District and City councils must be given the following powers: public order, police, excepting armed constabulary, the administration of jails, public health, sanitation, hospitals and dispensaries should, in the main, be handed over to the cities and districts, with the State enjoying regulatory powers. Education up to the middle school level should also be reserved for the local bodies. Municipal transport and means of communication within the limits of the cities and districts should be handed over to the local bodies subject to the States' regulatory powers. Burials and cremations, pilgrimages, etc., should also be their main responsibility. Gas and gasworks withing the urban limits should belong to the domain of the city. And markets and fairs, inns and theatres. etc, should also be handed over to the local bodies.

Cities and districts should be given well defined powers of taxation such as octroi, property taxes, etc. Taxes on goods and passengers within city limits ought to be handed over to them. They must also be given a share in the revenue from State excise duties and sales tax.

So far as possible, the States should be made financially independent of the Centre, and local bodies, too, should have their own

sources of revenue not dependent upon the sweet will of the State legislature.

The Rajamannar Committee had suggested that the States should be given a share in corporation tax, customs and export duties, and the tax on the capital value of assets. All these suggestions, including surcharge on income-tax, are entirely acceptable. While the Finance Commission at the Centre needs to be reorganised, there is also need to set up State Finance Commissions to make recommendations with regard to the sharing of revenue be-tween the State and local bodies. The recommendations of the Finance Commissions should be binding on all the parties-the Centre, the States and the local bodies.

It is undeniable that through the non-statutory Planning Commission, food grains allocations in the days of shortages, allocation of other essential articles like kerosene, etc., and a system of development grants and loans, and, above all, discretionary grants, the Centre has come to acquire a stranglehold over the States. These discretionary allocations should be totally eliminated and well defined criteria should be laid down for making special grants to eliminate the economic backwardness of regions, ensuring a more balanced development of the various parts of the country, and a more equitable distribution of per capita income between the States and the regions within the States.

It is very necessary to redefine the role of the Governors in our consti-. tutional set-up. Not only should specific principles be established for guiding their actions in respect of // formation of governments and the summoning and proroguing, etc., of the legislatures, the power to order mid-term polls also needs to be restricted. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of West Germany puts severe restrictions on this vast discretionary power which can be used and has been used by ruthless Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers for partisan ends.

The power conferred on the President to refuse assent to the bills passed by the State legislatures is contrary to the federal principle and should be done away with. The power to create or abolish legislative councils should vest in the State assemblies and should need no endorsement of Parliament.

Emergency provisions need to be drastically revised. No State government should be dismissed so long as it stays within the four corners of its own jurisdiction; any over-stepping by the States may be prevented, but the States should not be deprived of the right to appeal to the Supreme Court against the Centre. The Union Government's attempt to create various police forces by stretching the relevant entry in the Union list should be curbed.

The Rajamannar Committee seems to have put a great deal of faith in the Inter-State Council. I do not think that this Council can perform miracles in the matter of harmonising Centre-State relations. It is much better to define the areas of these organs in the Constitution itself. Conflicts should be adjudicated by the Supreme Court. There is no harm in restricting excessive representation of any States in the Union Cabi-

The question of States' representation in the Rajya Sabha is much more complicated. The area and population of Indian States is very unequal. On the one hand there are big States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra and, on the other, tiny States like Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland. The proposal to break up the big States will not only further aggravate the malady of mounting non-development, administrative expenditure.

However, the disproportion in representation of these States of unequal size in the Rajya Sabha can be reduced; and this election can be made direct like the election to the American Senate. The elements of nomination should be completely eliminated from Parliament, State legislatures and local bodies.

In any discussion of the problem of decentralisation, it should never be forgotten that constitutional forms generally reflect the relation of class and caste forces in society or State. During the period of the British Raj the ruling class consisted of: the dominant British bureaucracy, British capital and their junior Indian partners comprising the princes and the zamindars, the Indian element of the ICS and the compradore bourgeoisie. Today, the ruling elite consists of the bureaucratic classes and the big bourgeoisie who have either absorbed or displaced the feudal element. At the State level, however, a new element is contending for a larger share in power—the rich and prosperous farmers, using modern techniques and largely drawn from non-bureaucratic, non-brahman castes. Cooperative institutions and rural development agencies have been harnessed by these new elements for furthering their ends.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi the bureaucratic classes have asserted their dominant position in the country's political power to acquire economic Very often the bureaucratic classes dress up their aspirations in terms of a bastard socialism and the top bourgeoisie talks of free enterprise. But both have, in fact, a vested interest in the present mixed economy in which the public sector, including the nationalised credit institutions, subserve the interests of the profiteers.

Both these classes are opposed to the demand for decentralisation of power or socialisation of large open a Pandora's box but it will scale industries, establishment of workers' participation and popular control over the management of the economy, wide dispersal of the publicly owned industries among the Centre, the States, the zila parishads and municipalities/panchayat, and above all to the introduction of a new small unit technology which will mitigate alienation. At the State level also, the rising ruling elite does not favour a wide dispersal of power among the organs of local selfgovernment.

> Clearly, the creation of a fourpillar State and socialised economy alone will ensure a fair deal for the down-trodden sections of our society.

An imperative necessity

V. SHANKAR

UNITY in diversity has been a much repeated and much paraded aspect of India. Yet I doubt if those who repeat or parade the concept have wondered whether it is correct in fact and in substance. Unity has been defined as 'oneness' consisting of 'parts which constitute a whole', thereby emphasising' the aspect of coherence of the different parts. If this definition of unity is correct, India has still to achieve it.

It is true that, geographically, the sub-contnent constitutes a coherent physical mass but what we gained from nature we have lost in politics. In the spiritual field, Hindu-ism, the dominant religion, is a federation or in the way it has absorbed Buddhism or has harboured many often warring cults of Shaivite and Vaishnavite followers, it is a confederation—a Union and not a unity. Of the other religions, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are international and not national; Sikhism is certainly all-India in some respects but mostly territorial within the all-India boundaries.

I need hardly dwell on cultural, sartorial and habitual separatisms which constitute its body politic. Even our characteristics and outlook differ from area to area and many things that go to constitute what we are or can or will be have a variety out of which it is well

nigh impossible to weave a fabric of unity.

It is on this kaleidoscope that history has been playing its pranks. It can hardly be said that there was any political, cultural or religious unity in the country in the remote past. There was separatism of religions, beliefs, social systems, communities, tribes, spheres of influence and governments.

Sometimes attempts were made to create a hegemony by force of arms through the performance of Ashwamedha-yagna (horse-sacrifice), but at best it constituted nominal suzerainty without integration and at worst it was a passing phase. It is true that some savants, seers and saints had visions of Bharat-Varsha but it was hardly different from that of a Supreme God pervading the universe.

Historically, the first time a certain measure of 'one-ness', in the political or territorial sense, was achieved was during the reign of Ashoka the Great. But reality asserted itself after a short period and India broke into fragments. Thereafter, no emperor has been able to claim undisputed sway over the whole sub-continent.

Alauddin brought almost the whole of India under one rule but only militarily and not administratively or structurally. The Guptas

confined themselves mostly to Northern India and even then their administrative system was mostly an imitation of Chandra Gupta Maurya's which had already collapsed due to the process of time and it again suffered a similar fate after the strong hand of the Guptas had been removed. Harsha's Empire was again a flash in the pan, with the result that when the Rajputs attained ascendancy they were mostly concerned with fighting amongst themselves rather than leaving any permanent traces of their administration behind.

The general system of village communities, however, remained more or less undisturbed through these centuries.

Apart from this traditional legacy which the country inherited from the past and the great formative influence which Shankaracharya exercised in maintaining the semblance of religious unity, there was hardly any visible evidence of the oneness of the country. The dream of unity remained, therefore, a visionary ideal pervading the intellectuals rather than going down to the grass roots of rural life which constituted the main base and feature of India's polity.

It was at this stage that a strong and violent external influence intervened in shaping the destiny of the country; and the Muslim rule which began in Sind earlier but commenced in Delhi somewhat later was an alien factor in the Indian system. The general mass shrank from it, but the aggressive invaders were not inclined to let them alone.

Since it was a case of small numbers against the general mass, it was inevitable that the hub of governmental activity should be concentrated in Delhi which was the seat of government right up to the days of the Tughlaks. What the country then witnessed was the imposition of alien rule through a central anthority, its minions and its provincial governors who occasionally became independent themselves.

There is evidence to show that, barring general conversions, the Indian community was left undisturbed. The opposing military hordes of the central authority, and provincial and local chieftains marched through the countryside while the populace bowed before the blast in deep, silent disdain; their swords sparkled and shone while the poor men of the Indian community went on with the business of survival in their own traditional ways

Even the religious innovation of Islam did not seem to have met with any intellectual resistance until the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries when, one after the other, saints from all parts of India arose to form a mighty Bhakti movement which gave a new turn and a mass character to Hinduism, something it had lacked during the heyday of Brahminical intellectualism.

A permanent change in the constitution and composition of village life began to occur during the reign of Sher Shah and subsequently in the reign of Akbar and his successors when for the first time a scientific revenue system was introduced along with a modernistic judicial and administrative hierarchy. During the long period of centralised Mughal rule in the reigns of Akbar, Jehangir, Shahjehan and Aurangzeb, a territorial and administrative unity was forged which was, however, largely confined to northern India since the Deccan Sultanates could not be brought and consolidated under Mughal rule due to incessant warfare. The result was that in the South the traditional system continued to reign supreme.

It would thus be seen that, except for some leavening of a modernistic centralised system of administration, practically the whole of the South and many parts of the North continued to live and let live in the traditional ways which they had inherited from time and history. The main characteristic of those traditional ways was local autonomy hedged in by a rigid caste system which divided community life into narrow grooves, ruts from which both individuals

and the community found difficult to shift themselves.

Even the chaos that overtoon the country after the reign of Auragzeb and the emergence of loal chiefs, like the Nizam, Hyder A and the Peshwas, merely perpetuated the status quo without significantly affecting the outlook of individuals or the organisation of communal life.

A rude shock to this entire system was given by the Renaissance movement of the 19th century and the highly centralised system of administration which the British introduced in the country. It was during the 100 years of British rule, roughly from 1818 to 1919, that the whole of the country shook with the ramifications of the British system of justice, the British system of administration including taxation and the system of governance of the country based on distant authorities in London with local representatives in Calcutta and other presidency and provincial headquarters.

The system of administration was such as almost completely to upset the organisation of village communities and systems of local rules that prevailed all over the country in the past, although conditions and circumstances which varied from area to area did effect some modifications. There is no doubt that on the whole an element of unity permeated the whole structure.

Let was during this period, therefore, that the foundations were laid not only for the current but also for the future highly centralised system of administration of the Government of India. Government then became the cynosure of all eyes. It has been aptly described as a Ma Bap Government. In fact, in my school days, an apocryphal story was current that when an Inspector of Schools asked a boy why the earth went round the sun, he answered, 'under the orders of the Sarkar (government)'.

There were champions of the village community system but their voices were drowned amid the mass of crusaders who thought they were

going to bring a new heaven on this earth by slavishly imitating the West in thought, word and deed. The result was that the old decentralised systems broke down or fell into disuse, while a new alien system was transplanted on to the native soil.

The Act of 1919 was the first significant measure of decentralisation that was undertaken by the British Government. It is true that some self-governing institutions like the municipalities, district boards and village panchayats had been constituted and given necessary powers: but the official supervision and control took away with the left hand what was given by the right. The Act of 1919, while introducing dyarchy and separating certain nation-building subjects and vesting them under Indian control with enhanced powers, did mark a de-parture from the British policy of centralisation. There is no doubt that under the impact of liberalism, not only did provinces become less dependent on the Centre but the Indian Ministers introduced progressive measures which recognised to an increasing extent the autonomy of self-governing institutions.

By this time, under the impact of liberal philosophies from the West, the intellectuals of the country began to think in terms of a united India and an Indian nation. With the foundation of the Congress in 1885, that movement received an impetus which began to claim increasingly large adherents in the country, notwithstanding the fact that two opposing forces emerged, namely, British officialdom and its creation, Muslim separatism. The more officialdom resisted the urge for nationhood and self-government, the more the movement gathered strength. After the partition of Bengal, and under the influence of leaders like Lokmanya Tilak, an apologetic organisation became a fighting institution.

Gandhiji's arrival in India, his local movements, like the satyagraha in Kheda and in Champaran, and the non-cooperation movement fanned national enthusiasm to an extent not experienced before. National consciousness spread

swiftly. His adoption of the Khilafat movement as his own brought about a temporary comradeship between the Hindus and the Muslims. Although the transient enthusiasm evaporated after a couple of years, there is no doubt that a new substantial idea of secularism permeated both the Hindus and the Muslims as members of the Indian community.

A mass disillusionment gripped us with the launching of the Shuddhi and Sangatan movements on the one side and Tabligh and Tamzeem movements on the other. The one was led by an erstwhile nationalist, Swami Shraddanand, and blessed by a nationalist leader like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. while the other was led by Khilafat leaders like Dr. Kitchlew. The inevitable consequence of this was communal rioting which re-introduced a poison into our community life. The spread of this poison was sought to be controlled only when we attained independence.

In the meantime, both under the Act of 1919 and under the Act of 1935 which introduced greater autonomy in provincial matters, progressive measures for the development of the community were undertaken. Congress ministries attempted a certain measure of decentralisation in the administrative system and in political and social life.

he aftermath of the Second World War during which the country was governed under a very rigid and highly centralised system could not, however, be dealt with through a system of autonomy of the rigid type. Instead, there was a tendency to regulate the affairs of the country more or less through central control or advice which became an euphemism for indirect control.

Under the Cabinet Mission Plan, which provided for a weak Centre dealing with only defence, external affairs and communications, perhaps a reverse tendency would have been introduced. Hardly was the ink dry on it, when the plan to partition was on the agenda.

In the subsequent constitutionmaking in which we more or less slavishly imitated the West, particularly the system prevalent in the United Kingdom, the division of powers between the Centre and the States was such as to tilt the balance strongly in favour of the Union of India as against the States. This was done with the idea of preserving the recently-won freedom, maintaining the integrity of the country which had been achieved after a great deal of effort, though in a comparatively short time, preserving law and order which was seriously threatened at the time and which has continued to be a problem ever since and in securing the planned development of the country under an over-all socialistic umbrella but which lacked definition.

Thus, after independence and until recently, the tendency has been towards more and more centralisation. What encouraged this tendency was the fact that a monolithic political organisation for a number of years existed both at the Centre and in the States.

The emergence of a communist Ministry in Kerala in 1957 and subsequently in the sixties, the formation of non-Congress ministries in some States after 1967 and the emergence of the DMK in Madras after 1962 set in motion a contrary trend; but the elections of 1971 and 1972 to the Central and many of the State legislatures threatened to terminate this trend and to re-introduce the earlier system of the Congress chariot being driven all over the country, not in the nominal sense of the old Ashwamedha Yagna but in the real sense of one-party rule with inevitable characteristic centralisation.

Even the Congress Party organisation in 1966 seemed to be well on the way to decentralisation. But, in recent months, that organisation also has been subjected to one central authority and may in fact be subjected to one central figure.

At the same time, the process of integration which was achieved in

1947-49 and which was consecrated in the Constitution in 1950 has itself been subjected to certain strains due to the emergence of linguistic provinces on the one side and small States like Tripura, Manipur, NEFA, Nagaland, Pondicherry and Goa on the other. In so far as these small States are in accord with the principle of decentralisation, the change might be considered as a healthy one; but in so far as these small units lack the makings of self-contained units and self-contained communities. might not be so welcome.

rom this brief summary of political and other developments in India it would appear that Indian nationhood is a concept of recent growth, that there are aspects which throw doubt as to whether that nationhood has attained maturity, that it is difficult to maintain that Indian unity has been or is a fact and that conditions and circumstances prevalent in the country show contrary trends of centralisation or decentralisation.

To my mind, centralisation is a recent imposition while decentralisation is a recent casualty. It is out of this history and this set of conditions and circumstances that we have to evolve an Indian system true to our genius, consistent with our ambitions of development and likely to yield satisfactory results in the short time vouchsafed to us. Of all these the time-factor is of the greatest importance.

In its development, India lags behind even some of the smaller European States. The problems of poverty and unemployment are of immense magnitude. The task of administration and implementation under central direction and inspiration over the vast sub-continent and through layers of authority both Central and State is not only strenuous and stupendous but fraught with uncertainties.

It is also impossible to ensure uniformity in quality and standards under varying local conditions of education, manpower, and political education. Villages, by far the largest number of units and absorbing more than three-fourths of the population, have yet to wake up to

their needs and strength. The towns and the people who inhabit them appear more alert to their socalled rights than to their obligations.

Large parts of the country are exposed to the ravages of drought and floods. The net-works of communications and media of education and instruction have left many areas out; whatever enlightenment is put across merely whets the appetite for more without government possessing means of satisfying it. Despite twenty years of planning, the national income is perilously on the brink of a fall if it has not fallen already in real terms. Procrastination, delays, shifting of responsibilities are far too common to be tolerable.

Failures of planning, administration and implementation are writ large on the face of the country. A political lead is seldom in terms of these realities; it is more in the nature of catch-words, phrases, slogans, and vague generalities than in perspectives with realisable aims and objectives.

It is true that villages and towns are showing some signs of apparent prosperity, but the impact of prosperity on the Indian economy is not commensurate with needs. For twenty years we have harped on a policy of increasing self-reliance, and periodically we lapse into a cry for import-substitution, but I doubt if we have made sufficient progress in essentials. At this rate we shall need a hundred years to be where even some of the small nations of Europe are today.

The USSR has taken more than 50 years to reach its present standards; from the point of view of well-being there is still a wide difference between it and, say, Yugoslavia. China is still in the throes of periodic cultural struggles and its standard of life, although well-controlled and well-directed, is still in the bicycle stage and of a uniform, work-a-day pattern.

Neither of these highly centralised countries can be a model for us. We have thus a long way to go in our ambition to develop, with a full sense of satisfaction, our well-being; at the same time we

have to do so as expeditiously as possible, in decades and not in half-centuries. It is clear that we cannot do so on the lines that we have been following. The problem, therefore, arises as to what the alternative is.

When we explore the alternative, it is, to my mind, profitless to investigate what the Indian system was or has been. The fact is that there never was a system. Indeed, even our multiplicity of systems have either gone into disuse or have been transformed into new incarnations. At the same time there can scarcely be any doubt that the system of imposition from above, which has been followed for the last 150 years, has failed to yield results, satisfactory in terms of required achievement or of the time-factor.

A close study of even our political institutions and leadership will reveal that they have failed to give adequate stimulus for exertion, to create the required sense of dedication, and to impart the right lead to the evolution of sound policies and their implementation. We have made. I thing, the mistake on the one side of basing the triangle on its apex and on the other of trying to grow figs out of thistle.

What is worse is that, as a commodity, we have been short of leadership for a long time. One banyan tree. howsoever large, cannot fill the whole garden. The result is that we are witnessing the spectacle of smothering whatever leadership existed—and of expecting to be led but refusing to follow. We do not now take over ideas from what the leaders or so-called leaders say, but from the flotsam and jetsam that we collect from a cursory reading of daily news-papers, magazines, many of them with sex appeal, television programmes and cheap ideological literature of a type which creates hunger without satisfaction, emotion without discipline, egoism without restraint, and irresponsibility without correction.

In this context, decentralisation would certainly be a remedy, but decentralisation without a common platform, a common objective and a common programme would only create anarchy and chaos and ultimately pave the way for a political Napoleon. Decentralisation must be over a unit which can be comparatively self-contained in political education, in manpower, in development, in scientific and technological content and in the quality of thought and ideas. It is only then that development can be sponsored, nurtured and progressed from the grass-roots and a sense of belonging, participation and dedication can be induced—all of which are the pre-requisites of quick growth.

It is not necessary from this point of view to think in terms of a political, geographical or territorial What is necessary is first to think of Base Units and then group them into regions to secure uniformity and common standards of achievement and approach. To take decentralisation down to the districts would involve too much dispersal. It should be possible, from the point of view I have mentioned, to evolve about fifty Units of autonomy on specific consideration of various factors involved and base on them a well-considered scheme of decentralisation, with the Centre retaining subjects certain essential detence, external affairs, national communications, and some other subjects of all-India importance like banking, insurance, finance, the guiding of the new autonomous Units through general planning objectives, targets and norms, together with schemes of Central financial, technical and administratives assistance to needy Units.

Once the general approach to decentralisation is settled, institutional support can be devised and imparted. The sphere of financial autonomy of the new administrative Units should be widened in order to ensure that they make the maximum efforts to raise finances for their own development but the central funds should be 'made available in accordance with settled general principles. From these autonomous Units downwards there would have to be similar decentralisation, governed by some agreed approach and principles, but a considerable measure of supervision and direction would have to be retained with the Unit.

The control that the Unit should exercise would be such as not to make it unnecessary visible, though its presence may be felt. There is nothing more degrading to a political entity than to appear in the public eye to be subject to the apron-strings of another authority. What is necessary above all is to ensure that, in the words of Ghalib, 'Wine is served according to the capacity of the cup' and that vaulting ambition does not overleap but is firmly in the saddle. The political side will have to be organised in step with this approach to decentralisation.

A part from other reforms that may be necessary, some form of annual accountability of the Parliament and Unit Legislatures to their respective people must be evolved and the electoral system so reformed as to make them representatives of not the people as a whole but of their ideas; in other words, the system prevalent in West Germany deserves closer study and may, with some adaptation, serve the purpose. We must introduce the systems of referendum and initiative on our constitutional system.

These are some of the general ideas which the subject of decent-ralisation has induced in me. I wish I had the time and the space to devote to a more detailed elaboration, but if what I have said provokes some heart-searching as to the past and some hard thinking as to the future I shall deem myself adequately recompensed. What we need is to bear in mind the old advice;

Whatever you do, do with your might

Things done by halves are never done right',

and to seek lessons from Long-fellow's Village Blacksmith when he says:

Toiling rejoicing sorrowing
Onward through life he goes
Each morning sees some task
begin

Each evening sees its close Something attempted, something

Hath earned a night's repose'.

The dilemmas

L, M, SINGHVI

THERE is little doubt that decentralization was not the dominant theme of the national elite's thinking when our Constitution was being drafted, although the leading and articulate members of the Constituent Assembly were not oblivious of the strong Gandhian predilection for a decentralized democracy based on village communities. The debates in the Constituent Assembly on this issue provide an instructive insight into the dilemmas and problems of constitution-making and the mechanics of compromise which were adopted.

The Resolution on the aims and objects of free India's Constitution dwelt on India's commitment to democracy but made no specific

reference to the goal of decentralization. Jawaharlal Nehru did, however, say on that occasion:

'Obviously we are aiming at democracy and nothing less than a democracy. What form of democracy, what shape it might take is another matter... In any event whatever system of government we may establish here must fit in with the temper of our people and be acceptable to them. We stand for democracy. It will be for this House to determine what shape to give to that democracy, the fullest democracy...'

M. R. Masani quoted Mahatma Gandhi who had said at about that time: 'The Centre of power now is in New Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India.'

In Harijan of December 21, 1947, Gandhiji wrote:

'I must confess that I have not been able to follow the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly... (the correspondent) says that there is no mention or direction about village panchayats and decentralization in the foreshadowed Constitution. It is certainly an omission calling for immediate attention, if our independence is to reflect the peoples' voice. The greater the power of the panchayats, the better for the people.'

In April 1948, Dr Rajendra Prasad referred the issue of decentralization and village panchayats to the Constitutional Adviser who submitted to him a note in which he said:

'Even if the panchayat plan is to be adopted, its details will have to be carefully worked out for each province and for each Indian State with suitable modification for towns. Apart from other difficulties, this will take time and rather than delay the passing of the Constitution further, it would seem better to relegate these details to auxiliary legislation to be enacted after the Constitution has been passed.'

The issue came to a head in the course of the second reading of the Draft Constitution in the Constituent Assembly in November, 1948. Dr B. R. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, decided to meet the Gandhian criticism headlong and launched a frontal attack on the idea that the new Constitution should have been built upon village panchayats and district panchayats. Ridiculing what he called the infinite, if not pathetic love of the intellectual Indian for the village community, Dr Ambedkar said:

'The existence of these village communities, each one forming a separate little State in itself, has, according to Metcalfe, contributed

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more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of the freedom and independence. No doubt the village communities have lasted where nothing else lasts. But those who take pride in the village communities do not care to consider what little part they have played in the affairs and the destiny of the country; and why? Their part in the destiny of the country has been well described by Metcalfe himself who says: "Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down. Revolution succeeds to revolution. Hindoo, Mogul, Maharatha, Sikh, English are all masters in turn but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves. A hostile army passes through the country. The village communities collect their cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked".

'Such is the part the village communities have played in the history of their country. Knowing this, what pride can one feel in them? That they have survived through all vicissitudes may be fact. But mere survival has no value. The question is on what plane they have survived. Surely on a low, on a selfish level. I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. I am, therefore, surprised that those who condemn provincialism and communalism should come forward as champions of the village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the Draft Constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit.'

Dr. Ambedkar's devastating remarks on India's village republics provoked strong reactions and retorts in the debate, but the controversy which started with a bang ended in a whimper. Dr Ambedkar's categorical rejection of the panchayats as the basis of the Constitution

helped to crystallize the issue and brought it into focus.

A stimulating debate ensued. Speaker after speaker was at pains to voice his disagreement with and resentment over Dr Ambedkar's disparaging observations. Damodar Swarup Seth said:

'This Constitution as a whole, instead of being evolved from our life and reared from the bottom upwards is being imported from outside and built from above downwards. A Con-_stitution which is not based on units and in the making of which they have no voice, in which there is not even a mention of thousands and lakhs of villages of India and in framing which they have had no hand-well you can give such a Constitution to the country but I very much doubt whether you would be able to keep it for long.'

Professor Shibban Lal Saksena was 'pained to hear from Dr Ambedkar that he rather despised the system in which villages had a paramount voice'. H. V. Kamath thought that Dr Ambedkar's 'attitude was typical of the urban high brow' and said, 'if that is going to be our attitude towards the village folk, I can only say, God save us'. Arun Chandra Guha reiterated that 'the Gandhian and the Congress outlook has been that the future Constitution would be a pyramidal structure and its basis would be the village panchayats'. T. Prakasam took Dr Ambedkar to task for condemning the village panchayat system and said that Dr Ambedkar had not been able to put himself in the position of those who had been fighting for the freedom of this country for thirty long years.

R. K. Sidhwa reacted sharply and said:

'This is a Constitution prepared for democracy in this country and Dr Ambedkar has negatived the very idea of democracy by ignoring the local authorities and villages. Local authorities are the pivots of the social and economic life of the country and if there is no place for local authorities in this Constitution, let me tell you that the Constitution is not worth considering.'

Professor N. G. Ranga was most unhappy that Dr Ambedkar should have said what he had said about the village panchayats and remarked: 'All the democratic tradition of our country has been lost on him.' He continued:

'I wish to remind the House of the necessity for providing as many political institutions as possible in order to enable our villagers to gain as much experience in democratic institutions as possible in order to be able to discharge their responsibilities through adult suffrage in the new democracy that we are going to Without this foundaestablish. tion-stone of village panchayats in our country, how would it be possible for our masses to play their rightful part in our democracy? Do we want centralisation of administration or decentralisation? Mahatma Gandhi has pleaded over a period of thirty years for decentralisation. We as Congressmen are committed to de-Indeed all the centralisation. world is to-day in favour of decentralisation.'

Mahavir Tyagi spoke in the same vein as did T. Prakasam and Professor Ranga. He said that Dr Ambedkar did not know what amount of sacrifice the villagers had undergone in the struggle for freedom and made a plea for giving them their due share in the governance of the country. Sarangdhar Das expressed surprise 'that a respected member of this House has such an idea about our villagers.' He said there was no localism in the village. 'There is ignoranceyes, ignorance of the English language and also our various written languages, and that situation is due to the kind of government we had, a government that destroyed our educational system. As far as knowledge of nature and wisdom gathered from the Shastras and Puranas are concerned, I would say that there is more wisdom and more knowledge in the villages than in our modern cities.'

Dr Mohan Das sounded a note of caution to the 'enthusiastic prota-

gonists of the village panchayat system.' He said:

'Unless and until our village people are educated, unless and until they become politically conscious, unless they become conscious of their rights and privileges, this village panchayat system will do more harm than good.'

A few members felt, as did the Constitutional Adviser in his note of April, 1948, that the panchayat plan could be promoted by ordinary statutory legislation and the controversy was unnecessary. Balakrishna Sharma pointed out that the Constitution in no way ruled out the development of the village panchayats.

Dr Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, an eminent jurist, tried to ease the tension by saying:

'With the large powers vested in the provincial or State legislatures in regard to local self-government and other matters, there is nothing to prevent the provincial legislatures, from constituting the villages as administrative units for the discharge of various functions vested in the State governments.'

M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar suggested the inclusion of the objective of panchayati raj as a directive principle of State policy. He said:

'As we are situated today, is it at all possible immediately to base our Constitution on village republics? I agree this ought to be our objective. But where are these republics? They have to be brought into existence... Therefore, I would advise that in the directives, a clause must be added, which would insist upon the various governments that may come into existence in future to establish village panchayats, give them political autonomy and also economic independence in their own way to manage their own affairs.'

K. Santhanam struck the middle path and said:

'I am sorry that Dr Ambedkar went out of his way to speak

about village panchayats and say that they did not provide the proper background for a modern constitution. To some extent I agree but at the same time I don't agree with his condemnation of the village panchayats and his statement that they were responsible for all the national disasters. I think that in spite of revolution and changes, they have preserved Indian life and but for them India will be a chaos. I wish that some statutory provision had been inserted regarding village autonomy within proper limits. Of course there are difficulties because there are villages which are very small and there are big villages and many of them have to be grouped for establishing panchayats, but I do think that at some stage or other when all the provinces have set up panchayats, their existence may have to be recognised in the Constitution for in the long run local autonomy for each village must constitute the basic framework for the future freedom of this country.'

On 22nd November, 1948, K. Santhanam moved an amendment for the addition of a new article as a directive principle and this was promptly accepted by Dr Ambedkar. After a brief debate the amendment was adopted. This time Dr Ambedkar refrained from replying to the debate and to the criticisms levelled against him. Somewhat uneventfully, after a transient breeze, without precipitating an open fight and without really clinching the basic issue in constitutional terms, the confrontation ended in a concession which is now embodied in Article 40 of the Constitution.

Article 40 which figures in the chapter on the Directive Principles of State Policy, though not enforceable by any court, is nevertheless supposedly fundamental in the governance of the country. Article 40 provides:

'The State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.'

Article 40 of the Constitution seeks prospectively to accommodate the village panchayats in the structure of the Indian State, but the philosophy of decentralisation does not inform or pervade the Constitution as a whole and is not woven into its fabric. Article 40 is essentially devolutionary and conceives the village panchayats as recipients of power granted to them by the State Government and not as fountainheads of popular authority.

In the discursive debate that followed Dr Ambedkar's onslaught on the role of village communities, there was an emotive outpouring of outraged and eloquent sentiment but there was little coherent intellectual challenge to the premises of Dr Ambedkar's broadside. Nor was there an effective drafting attempt in evidence to make the village communities the institutional base of the pyramid of power.

The proponents of the idea did not take pains to conceptualize it in depth or to work out a model. The leading members of the Drafting Committee and the highest echelons of political leadership in the Constituent Assembly appear to have been indifferent to the idea of village panchayats as a base for the constitutional apparatus.

During British times, Lord Ripon pioneered in 1882 a determined effort to establish a system of local self-government. In a Resolution of the Government of India, dated 16th May, 1918, which took note of the recommendations of the Decentralisation Commission, it was emphasised that the domain of urban and rural self-government was a great training ground from which political progress and a sense of responsibility had taken their start, and that the time had come to quicken the advance, to accelerate the rate of progress and to stimulate the sense of responsibility in the average citizen and to enlarge his experience.

The Resolution stated that the object of local self-government was to train the people in the manage-

ment of their own local affairs and that political education of that sort must, in the main, take precedence of considerations of departmental efficiency. It was recognised that the local bodies should be as representative as possible of the people whose affairs they were called on to administer, that their authority in the matters entrusted to them should be real and not nominal and that they should not be subjected to unnecessary control, thus, enabling them to learn by their mistakes and to profit by them.

Although local self-government made some headway through municipalities in the cities and towns of India during the British times, the development of village panchayats was not substantial or notable. Legislation, however, was put on the statute book in several provinces in British India and in a large number of princely States during those years.

With the advent of Independence, there was a renewed interest in resurrecting the village panchayats who drew their inspiration mainly from Mahatma Gandhi who once outlined his concept of village swaraj in the following terms:

'My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its vital wants and yet inter-dependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food-crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playgrounds for its adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow useful money crops. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own water works ensuring clean supply. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on co-operative basis. There will be a compulsory service of village guards, who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The government of the village will be conducted by the panchayat of 5

persons elected annually by the adult villagers, male and female both possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. This panchayat will be legislature, judiciary and executive combined, to operate for its year of office. Any village can become such a republic today without much interference.' (Harijan, 26th July, 1942.)

Although Gandhi's scheme of village Swaraj failed to win acceptance in the operative scheme of the Constitution, the broad idea of local self-government through panchayats has been an important issue in the nation's thinking on political institutions. The Balwantrai Mehta Study Team brought the philosophy of Panchayati Raj to the fore in the middle fifties and gave a blueprint for elective democratic institutions at the levels of the district, the taluka and the village.

The Mehta Team recommended a three-tier structure of local selfgoverning bodies from village to the district and suggested a genuine transfer of power and responsibility to them with adequate resources based on progressive devolution and dispersal of power and responsibility. The State of Rajasthan was the first to translate the main recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee which summed up its underlying philosophy thus: 'So long as we do not discover or create a representative and democratic institution which will supply the local interest, supervision and care necessary to ensure that expenditure of money upon local objects conforms with the need and wishes of the locality, invest it with adequate power and assign to it appropriate finances, we will never be able to evoke local interest and excite local initiative in the field of development.'

A decade or more of panchayati raj institutions premised on the philosophy and the institutional approach of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee has not brought about a political or psychological revolution. There is an air of disillusionment and disenchantment with these institutions and there is an erosion

in the commitment to the philosophy of Panchayati Raj. In a candid inaugural address in 1969, a Union Minister acknowledged that there was a deep crisis enveloping Panchayati Raj (Haldipur and Paramhamsa, Local Institutions in Rural India, page 6).

The dimensions of the crisis of democratic de-centralisation in India are manifold and wide ranging. To understand the crisis of democratic decentralization is to understand the nature of the political process in India and the shortcomings not only of our institutions but also of our habits and temperament. The problems of democratic de-centralisation in India cut across politics, economics, psychology and sociology.

Perhaps we should find solutions to these problems in the dynamics of broadening the base of participation and in transforming the approach of the masses as well as the elites towards the structure and functions of power. On the foundations of such a consensus we could build a new structure of democratic institutions making our existing parliamentary apparatus more resilient, more vibrant and more responsive.

A major problem of democratic decentralization in our country arises from the crisis of identity, which the Panchayati Raj institutions encounter. These institutions are often regarded as the administrative extensions of the existing administrative structure. The image of these institutions is blurred. They evoke mixed reactions. Administratively and politically, they are not accepted as autonomous units of self-government and have failed to emerge as people's organisations. They have none of the advantages of established traditional institutions of power. They have nevertheless proved to be visible symbols of the power of the common people.

True, their subsidiary status saps their vitality and their self-reliance, but their proximity to the people and their daily concerns invest them with reserves of political power. In spite of the ambiguity of their status and notwithstanding the constant political interference of the State Governments and their political proteges, the Panchayati Raj institutions have demonstrated their potential and proved their political viability. The crisis of identity is perhaps implicit in the initial phases of growth and is capable of being resolved by certain institutional and attitudinal changes.

P or example, it is possible to make Panchayati Raj institutions quite autonomous under a statute of the State Legislature and by omitting supervisory provisions which oblige and enable the State governments to interfere. It is possible to take a further step by adding a chapter in the Constitution on Panchayati Raj institutions so that they may enjoy certain powers within the spheres allotted to them under the Constitution and not merely as agents or delegates of the State governments. This could lead, in effect, to the establishment of District Legislative Assemblies enjoying constitutionally demarcated legislative and executive powers.

There are those who would be alarmed at the prospect of popular assemblies at the district level and would see a strong threat in such a move to the integrity of the nation and the coherence of its political and administrative processes. I am of the view that autonomous and representative district assemblies would not necessarily be a debilitating factor if we are able to take care of the problems of the multiplicity of organisations and administrative structures and if we can regulate and reduce the divisive impact of representative politics.

Logically it is possible to justify the districts as the basic political units of organisation, particularly in the context of their proven administrative viability. In practical terms, however, we must reconcile the goals of efficiency and democratisation by optimising both. That is the yardstick on which the idea of the District Legislative Assemblies I have outlined should be critically examined. We should carefully weigh our experience of Panchayati Raj institutions and their strength and weaknesses.

The problem of the relationships between the Panchayati Raj institutions and the State governments merit particular scrutiny. The supervision and control is exercised, at present, by the State governments under the statute enacted by their respective legislatures. Is this supervision and control a real and serious impediment to the free growth of Panchayati Raj institutions? The question to consider is whether the control and supervision of the State governments should be lifted as an act of faith in the ultimate wisdom and the good sense of the people.

Another queston is whether the local bodies should act concurrently as autonomous units of self-government and as agents and delegates of the States. Apart from the undeniable need for healthy conventions to be built in this regard, there is clearly a need for the statutory regulation of the norms of these relationships.

Yet another question with farreaching significance is the question of the taxing and legislative powers which may be entrusted to the district units in order to promote democratic decentralisation and maximise efficiency. The areas would have to be carefully worked out.

In order that these institutions may work effectively, a sound financial base for resource mobilisation would have to be conceded to them rather than abandon them to discretionary grants and patronage subventions. An infra-structure of administration and staff would have to be worked out for the district. Safeguards would also have to be provided for the individual citizens, so that the populist pressures may not erode their freedom and fundamental rights.

A purposeful examination of these questions and concrete institutional proposals for making the districts, and in turn the villages, the basic units of Indian democracy would lead to a reconstruction of our polity, making our federalism a three-tier relationship and changing the legislative and executive distribution of powers into a more directly responsible, representative and responsive apparatus. Given the right context, this could immeasurably improve the quality of democratic life in our country.

Euture prospects

P. C. MATHUR

THE re-stabilization of the Indian political system during 1971-72 has once again kindled interest in the mechanics and dynamics of the institutional order of the Indian State. Interestingly. the very fact that the Indian system could survive a series of external crises and internal challenges during the sixties is being used as an argument by the advocates of the policy of restructuring the Indian polity whereas its recent sterling performance seemingly renders these pleas redundant.

Decentralization, it is true, has been an old theme in Indian public life but it would be highly unrealistic to advocate a policy of all-out decentralization and total rejection of the existing system which has shown its viability in no uncertain terms. Scrapping an on-going 'system', doctrines of 'revolutionary change' excepted, is always a risky business and the strategy of change should be based on a systematic assessment of the past trends, present configurations and possible trajectories of change.

The prescription in the poser ("we have to put 'decentralization' at the centre of the stage. We have to give it all priority and work towards the realization of the total 'system' from that vantage ground...") of system-change for India defies all these canons of change-management. The feasibility of such a radical agenda for reform is likely to be limited and prospects of a wholesale decentralization-oriented

reordering of the Indian system must be regarded as remote.

The domination of the 'centre' in the Indian political system (and the domination of that 'centre' by a single sub-system of the political system, viz., the Indian National Congress) has been so impressive and comprehensive in the post-1947 period that even the analytical distinction between the 'centre' tier of government and 'national' level of the Indian polity has become blurred. The concentration of political charisma in the central leadership during the years immediately following Independence coupled with the psychological trauma associated with the partition of the country on the eve of Independence had made the Indian founding fathers opt for a unitary institutional framework for the Indian State, characterized by the aggregation of constitutional powers, political status and economic resources at the Centre. The pre-eminence of the 'centre' in the Indian Union was a deliberate politico-constitutional choice and was in full consonance with the mainstream of current thinking about the structure and form of the Indian State.

The constitutional and institutional design of the Indian State system enshrined in the 1950 constitution not only mirrored the then prevailing political priorities regarding a strong Centre but also reflected a deeper Indian thoughtcurrent rooted in the theory of Indian history which ascribes a causal and determinate relation between foreign conquests and internal political fragmentation. The establishment of a strong and long-lasting State in the Indian sub-continent has been an idee-fixe in the Indian psyche for a long time and the withdrawal of the British from India was widely hailed as a step towards the realization of this goal even by those sections of Indian society where communal or sectarian considerations do not prevail.

What label the political philosophers might suggest for it, the desire of a people to constitute themselves into citizens of an extensive and durable political formation (State) is a legitimate and

potent determining factor influencing the structure of the State including the pattern of internal distribution of power, status and resources within it.

Further, given the strategic military uncertainties always inherent in the international political system, the desire to build a 'strong' State inexorably leads towards the centralization of political authority within the State. The historical vision of political unification of India combined with the hostility perceptions of the Indian powerelite have significantly influenced the over-all strategy of State-building in India and any proposed innovation or reform which runs counter (or is perceived to run counter) to it has little prospect of gaining acceptance.

The 'durational expectancy' of the Indian State has, indeed, reached a new peak following the brilliant performance of the Indian political system in coping with the series of political constitutional and strategic-military crises during the sixties. While the fifties was a period of all-round development of internal capabilities, as well as the international prestige of the Indian State, the next decade witnessed the eruption of a series of crises from within as well as without.

The debacle of Indian defence forces in 1962, Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964, the armed hostilities with Pakistan in 1965, severe and widespread droughts in 1966-67 and 1967-68, the great split in the Indian National Congress in 1969 and, above all, the dethronement of the Congress from the seats of governance in several States, plus a host of inter-related events, subjected India to a gruelling and unprecedented ordeal—the greatest strain being experienced on its constitutional and political front.

While the first two 'successions' had initiated the process of political and constitutional realignment in India, the 1967 general elections proved to be a watershed in India's political development. Almost each and every provision of the Indian Constitution was overlaid with controversy and doubts in the wake of the quickening of the pro-

cess of political change. It was reflected in such phenomena and events as frequent mid-term polls, large-scale legislative defections, frequent adjournments and dissolutions of legislatures, and acrimonious disputes regarding the legality and propriety of action or decisions taken by Chief Ministers, Speakers and Governors.¹

The rapidity with which one crisis followed another would have been regarded as system-destroying by any observer before the events actually happened but the Indian political system was able to cope with these several coincident and overlapping crises. Without going into the merits of the political debate regarding the role played by the Central Government in handling the crises during 1967-71, it can be safely asserted that the position of constitutional pre-eminence accorded to the Centre went a long way towards ensuring the integrity and stability of the Indian Union. The fear of the repetition of the Statelevel political disarray at the Centre was an important determinant in the massive electoral mandate secured by Indira Gandhi in the 1971 and 1972 polls.

The Central Government's deft handling of the problem created by the influx of the Bangladesh refugees and the military conflict with Pakistan in 1971 virtually completed a cycle. Almost shut out was the possibility of a revival of Maxwellian or Harrisonian arguments regarding the inability of the Indian political system to cope with internal and external crises.

The prospects of any proposal of reform in the existing situation must be judged along two interrelated dimensions, viz., (a) To what extent there is dissatisfaction or discontent with the on-going system; and (b) to what extent the proposed reform constitutes an improvement over the existing situation. To the extent that decentralization involves a dimuni-

For a detailed analysis of Indian political and constitutional development during 1967-71 see: Iqbal Narah, Tivilight or Dawn' Political Change in India, 1967-71 (Agra' Shiv Lal Agarwal and Sons, 1971).

tion in the unity, stability and durability of the existing Indian State, its acceptance is likely to be low even though a plausible case, at least in theory, can be made for the proposition that the post-decentralization State would not be more fragile or insecure.

This is specially so because in the Indian context 'decentralization' has been associated with the Gandhian philosophy of a non-violent social order consisting of small-scale and self-sufficient communities. And it is certainly a moot question as to what extent the Gandhian concept of decentralization is consistent with the ongoing pattern of institutional arrangement and development in India

It is, indeed, a sign of the growing irrelevance of the Gandhian model of political institutionalization that the case for decentralization is presented in the poser in the torm of a three-tier 1-6-300 model (postulating one centre-six zones-300 districts) and the modified standard Gandhian 0-7,00,000 model [No (or weak) Centre-Seven Lakh villages] enunciated in Gandhi's famous words (which, ironically, are quoted in the poser) that 'The Centre of power is in New Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages in India.'

While the general tenor of the poser is in tune with Gandhian idealism, this significant departure in terms of institutional form only shows that Gandhian postulates of State-building need to be modified to suit the existing realities. The Gandhian critique of the modern apparatus of the State and Statepower is, to be sure, a useful 'idealtype' which may help one to form political evaluations but it can hardly be presented as a determining principle of State policy at a time when the existing Indian State outrivals, in terms of population, territory as well as technological resources, all the States which are known to have existed on our sub-continent.

An idea of the insuperable difficulties likely to be encountered

by any radical scheme for decentralization in the Indian polity can be easily obtained by referring to the limited acceptance gained by Balwantray Mehta Team's proposals relating to Democratic Decentralization The introduction and development of rural local self-government had, indeed, been accepted as one of the major planks of the Indian freedom movement. The urgent challenges of State-building at Central and State levels relegated this item to the background in the Constituent Assembly at a time when Mahatma Gandhi was alive to observe the process of constitution-making.

To be sure, under the insistent pressure of the Gandhites, a token reference to 'village panchayats' was incorporated in Article 40. But the Indian power-elite (whether in 'government' or 'opposition') did not share the Gandhian belief in the saliency and urgency of restructuring the Indian polity from the village upwards.²

Moreover, whatever little was achieved by way of giving a fillip to rural local self-government under the scheme of institutionalization of Panchayati Raj during the early sixties was, more or less, eroded during the subsequent years. The introduction of Panchayati Raj implied, under the conditions of maximum devolution postulated in various Panchayati Raj statutes. only a marginal reform in the Indian State structure. The constitutional powers, economic resources and political status of the Central and State governments would have been hardly affected had all the concerned policy-makers effectively implemented the Bal-wantray Mehta Study Team's proposals.

Yet, in practice, public interest in Panchayati Raj flagged within a couple of years and many State

governments even went to the extent of re-centralizing some powers or resources which had been devolved upon the Panchayatı Raj institutions. While the State governments' were engaged in the 'devaluation' of Panchayatı Raj, the Central policy-makers and political leaders (with the significant exception, of course, of the Gandhian-Sarvodaya workers associated with the All India Panchayat Parishad) apparently did not feel concerned enough to intervene and check the reversal of policies adopted with great acclaim only a short while ago. A tell-tale index of the Centre's apathy towards Panchayati Raj is the prolonged delay over the appointment of a high-powered commission on Panchavati Rai.3

The successful retraction of the powers, resources or personnel. devolved upon the Panchayati Raj institutions by the concerned State government, underlines a basic feature of the Indian political system, viz., inter-level discontinuity. and disinclination of the Centre and State level political leaders to part with their constitutional and polt tical powers. It is, indeed, prima facie difficult to believe that the same MLAs and MPs who use local political operators as votebanks for their own election were able to resume powers and resources devolved upon the Panchayatı Raj institutions controlled by their local supporters until one realizes that decentralization occupies only a marginal place in the Indian political idiom and that the higher level political leaders can take their local-level supporters for granted.

To be sure, the pattern of interlevel linkages in the Indian polity is changing (and introduction of Panchayati Raj was itself a stimulant for the changes) but the day when there would be a massive local-level demand for decentralization is quite far off. In the absence of an effective demand, whatever the form or amount of decentrali-

² For details see AVARD, Panchayate Ray as the Basis of Indien Polity, (New Delhi AVARD, 1962) Also see PC Mathur 'Sociological Dimensions of Panchayati Ray'. Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. X, No. 1, Jan-March 1964: 58-72.

^{3.} For a detailed discussion of the empirical trends and research developments in the field of Panchayati Raj see. P. C. Mathur, Research in Local Political Systems in India A Trend-Survey (New Delhi: I.C.S S R., 1971) Mimeo

zation actually implemented, it can only be regarded as a concession retractable to suit the convenience of the central power-holders.

The 'failure-story' of Panchayatı Raj has a clear moral for all advocates of decentralization. The form and quantum of decentralization in any given political-constitutional framework are contingent upon the answer to the question: Who wants decentralization—the existing power-holders or the emergent power-seekers'? In the poser, the author has taken the necessity and desirability of decentralization for granted. It is difficult to visualize the Indian policy-makers and/or power-holders voluntarily agreeing to implement the manifold reforms envisaged in the poser when even the limited scheme of Democratic Decentralization was not given a full and fair trial.

Under such conditions of maximum change-resistance, the mere spelling out of the 'benefits' of decentralization is not enough as the 'costs' of restructuring the existing system may not be acceptable to the ruling elite. The emergent elite may also not be in a position to even retain the concessions it gets. The question of enforcing a radical restructuring of power relations in the Indian system is a much later phase.

The proponents of decentralization can, however, build up a credible case on the basis of the cultural argument because no political system can, in the long-run, function or survive unless the prevalent political culture takes full cognizance of the cultural pluralism obtaining in the country. While States in ancient and medieval times could overlook or overcome the divisive pulls of cultural diversity, the most important characteristic of modern States is greater emphasis on internal homogeneity.⁴

The strategies and instruments used by different States for ensur-

ing greater 'homogenisation' among their citizenry do differ from State to State but the recent history of State-building has shown that the internal cohesion of a State can be optimized under a federal or quasifederal system of decentralization in which distinct cultural entities enjoy specific sub-system autonomy.⁵

H istorically speaking, the most well-known modern formula for State-building is John Stuart Mill's one-nation-one-state postulate. It stipulates that within the boundaries of one 'State' only people belonging to one 'Nation' should reside and that people belonging to a distinct 'Nation' have a legitimate right to form a 'State' of their own rather than remain citizens of a multi-nation-State.⁶

While the limits and deficiencies of this Nation-State formula have been exposed in the European context itself, it has attracted considerable attention in the Third World. Here, its attempted application has triggered off a series of complications and unexpected chain-reactions. The trouble, of course, lies with the concept of 'Nation' itself because, while it is easy to chart out the zone of juristic sovereignty of a State, it is difficult to arrive at a consensus regarding its status as a Nation. The problem is specially acute in the case of the new States in the Third World where every ethnic group or cultural minority is ready to claim nationhood and, hence, the right to national self-determination.7

The only viable strategy of Statebuilding in the context of such poly-ethnic societies is to accord explicit recognition to the rights and aspirations of every significant minority on the specific condition that all such sub-cultural groups must extend total loyalty to the existing State and eschew separatism or secession. Federalization of the political system or adoption of a federal system designed to match the socio-cultural matrix of the State is an excellent device for political integration or institutional aggregation of sub-State loyalties.

Federalism is, therefore, a prerequisite for maintaining political cohesion in the case of nation-States like India where 'decentralization' should be regarded as primarily performing the systemmaintaining function of developing a 'loyalty-structure' which aggregates and orchestrates the multiple and often mutually repulsive primordial loyalties of the different segments of Indian society.

The current Indian strategy of State-building conforms, by and large, to the above mentioned guide-lines. In its endeavour to fabricate a viable and durable State, the Indian power-elite has always been ready to incorporate an element of political decentralization provided it yields a corresponding 'federal' payoff. The author of the poser is, therefore, on firmer ground when he pleads for decentralization in the name of sub-cultural legitimacy and multi-ethnic autonomy.

The great States' reorganization of 1956 was a step in this direction. It is safe to assume that the process of endowing political-constitutional recognition to other submerged minorities would continue even if it involves a restructuring of current beliefs about the constitutional design of the Indian federal system.

The idea of a multi-tier federal system consisting of units possessing an unequal quantum of powers, functions and resources has been, in a way, inherent in the process of constitutional development under the British regime. Starting with an emphasis on administrative and financial devolution, the British rulers of India gradually 'federali-

⁴ Cf. (i) Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nation. The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples, (Calcutta: Scientific Book Agency, 1970). (ii) Lucian Pye and Sydney Verba (ed) Political Culture and Political Development (Princeton Princeton University Press, 1965)

This proposition has been empirically analysed in the context of South Asia in P C Mathur, Federalism and National Integration in South Asia (Jaipur; South Asia Studies Centre, 1970), Mimeo.

⁶ Cf. John Stuart Mill, (Considerations on Representative Government, (New York Forum Books Inc., 1958), 230.

For a detailed discussion, in the specific context of South Asia, see. P. C. Mathur, 'Nation-Building New States: The conflict of solidarity and sovereignty in South Asia', South Asian Studies, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1970: 32-48.

zed' the Indian polity in a series of constitutional reforms culminating in the full-blown 'federal plan' of the Government of India Act, 1935.8

While the structural details of this scheme are no longer policy-relevant, its basic idea of a federation of unlike and unequal units was carried over into the 1950 Constitution. It specifically established four different types of governmental units and integrated them into the Indian Union with the aid of several federal mechanisms not found in any other federal system in the world.

Recently, the institutional flexibility of the Indian federal system was once again demonstrated in the eastern region of the country where various types of sub-federal units were set up before their elevation to full Statehood. The idea of inter-position of a 'zonal' tier between the Centre and States—was itself given a trial in the form of zonal Councils which, however, failed to click.

There is certainly nothing sacrosanct about the standard US two-tier federal system and, in view of the recent advances in federal theory and practice, the three-tier federal model proposed in the poser may be regarded as feasible and compatible with India's constitutional history and cultural heritage.

The scope of decentralization, as outlined in the poser, is, however, very often conceived in broader terms than that implied in the foregoing analysis of the feasibility of restructuring the federal system to operationalize a system of political-constitutional decentralization. The Gandhi-Jayaprakash-

It is, however, one thing to argue for the adoption of a three-tier federal system as a devise for decentralization. It is quite a different matter to suggest that the existing pattern of power stratification in the Indian polity should be restructured along with the proposed institutional reform.

A proposal for re-drawing of the boundaries of units and sub-units of the Indian State or a simple reallocation of powers between different tiers of government should not be lumped together with a proposal for far-reaching changes in the value-premises of the Indian people. While the former can be defended on its own merits, the latter involves complex issues of ends-means relationship.

It is, for example, a case of denying one's own premises to plead for the establishment of a political system which gives all the citizens a part in the decision-making process and also prescribes contents and/or outputs of that decision-making process in advance. Moreover, the plea that decentralization is a desirable end does not absolve its advocates from the necessity of demonstrating a 'feltneed' for it; and if they, on the ground that existential realities must be subordinated to the higher cause of desirable eventualities. insist on implementation of their design of decentralization as a sort of 'reform from above', their insistence would hardly be consistent with their proclaimed ideals of democracy and democratic change.

Hence, while the specific suggestion for reforming the institutional

framework of the Indian State is acceptable (on grounds mentioned as well as other cognate reasons) the devoted advocacy of a radical transformation of an on-going system is not likely to gain many converts despite the impressive pedigree of the ideas so persuasively elaborated in the poser article.

Utopian overtones apart, the proposal for the adoption of a three-tier federal system for India deserves serious consideration keeping in view the fact that Panchayati Raj made an appreciable impact only in those States where the district was chosen as the focal unit of Democratic Decentralization. The 300 and odd revenue districts can, after due adjustments to ensure greater inter-district uniformity in matters of area, population and inter-state distribution, certainly serve as viable units for economic planning and development as well as constitute a ready-made arena for the preservation and development of socio-cultural diversity.

For the more effective attainment of these two objectives it would be desirable to strengthen and streamline district administration and bring the districts under the purview of the Indian Constitution as a distinct organ of the Indian State. With the incorporation of the district as a unit of the federal system, the total package of powers, functions and resources falling in the ambit of Democratic Decentralization is likely to increase and thereby contribute to the operationalization of the concept of decentralization in a concrete manner.

Only when one recalls that the sustained campaign for 'constitutionalization' of Panchayati Raj fizzled out with no tangible results, can one realize the significance of this modest proposal being implemented. To hope for a drastic re-modelling of the Indian system, specially at a time when it has demonstrated its capacity to surmount internal as well as external challenges and cleavages, is not only unrealistic but also self-defeating.

Sarvodaya model of decentralization, which the poser has tried to resurrect in the form of the 1-6-300 model by proposing that the district (i.e. the lowest tier) should be the repository of all powers and the powers of the higher units, viz., Centre and the States, should flow upwards from the district which shall also retain all the residuary powers, involves a fundamental reordering of the Indian economy, polity and society and not merely the addition of a third tier to the two-tier federal system.

^{8.} For details see: Urmila Phadnis, Towards the Integration of Indian States 1919-1947 (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1968).

^{9.} Cf. (1) Carl J. Friedrich, Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice (New York: Praeger, 1968), (11) Ivo. D. Duchacek, Comparative Federalism: The Territorial Dimensions of Politics (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), (111) Valerie, Earle (ed), Federalism: Infinite Variety in Theory and Practice (Itasca, Ill: F. E. Peacock Publishers Inc. 1968), (v) Geoffrey Sawer, Modern Federalism (London: C. A. Watts and Co. Ltd., 1960).

Books

NATIONAL CONVENTION ON UNION-STATE

RELATIONS—Institute of Constitutional and

Parliamentary Studies, 1970.

The evolution of Union-State relations in India since independence has followed an erratic course. Although the Constitution provides a broad framework of reference, yet regional feelings, parochial pressures and conflicting claims for Plan priorities and for a share of the financial resources have affected the relationship all these years in no small measure. The current controversies on agricultural income tax and land and urban property ceilings have introduced an entirely new element into the situation.

While the reorganisation of States on a linguistic basis was the main issue agitating the people's minds in the fifties, the last decade witnessed the end of uniparty control, the emergence of the politics of consensus at the Centre (a rather brief interlude), the instant formation and fall of coalition governments in several States, the Congress split, a series of midterm elections and so on. For a while it seemed that the fabric of India's federal structure would be torn asunder and we would return to the pre-British days of internecine strife and instability. While the DMK Chief Minister of Madras vowed to fight against the 'overlordship' of the Centre, his communist counterpart in Kerala asserted his State's right to import food directly. Another demand persistently voiced was for broadening the 'taxation potential'. The Congress Party's reduced majority in Parliament after the 1967 poll, and a further thinning of its ranks following the 1969 split, which made the Prime Minister lean heavily for survival on the Chief Ministers, increased the Centre's difficulties.

The tide again turned in New Delhi's favour with Mrs. Gandhi winning a massive majority in the Lok Sabha elections of 1971. This was followed by a spectacular military victory against Pakistan, the emergence of a friendly independent Bangladesh and the return of the Congress to power in the States (barring one or two) early this year. As a result, the Prime Minister again dominates the national scene as was the case during the Nehru era. This, however, is no abiding solution to Centre-State conflicts which will continue to develop in newer forms and fields. Therefore, the need to strike a viable equation remains as strong.

The volume under review contains papers presented at the National Convention on Union-State Relations held in New Delhi in April 1970. The issues involved were examined from all possible angles by research scholars, administrators, constitutional experts and economists. Several shortcomings and anomalies in the Constitution and other statutes

surfaced during the discussions. Some of the most sensitive spots discovered concern not the Union-State relations but inter-State disputes over boundaries and river waters, with the Centre finding it impossible to discipline combatants.

The constitutional provisions have been studied in depth by Mrs. Alice Jacob, K. Santhanam and A. T. Markose. In Mrs. Jacob's view, the autonomy implicit in the division of powers on which the federal character of the Union rests is essentially a functional devolution rather than a conferment of sovereign rights. Santhanam's formulation is that 'the more the States feel that in their field they are as truly and effectively masters of the destiny of their people as the Centre is in its own sphere, the stronger will be the federation.' Markose feels that although the Supreme Court is the umpire of Indian federalism, the judicial method is not suitable for settling all types of disputes.

While N. Srinivasan draws the limelight on the roles of the Centre and the States in agricultural development, P. N. Dhar analyses the problems arising out of planned industrial development. Economic planning in a vast and variegated country like India, according to Dhar, has to be a series of balancing acts between the conflicting national and regional economic goals.

The States derive a substantial part of their income from sharing of the tax proceeds, grants and loans from the Union Government. The present pattern of distribution, according to D. T. Lakdawala, unduly favours the Centre. G. Ramachandran, however, feels that the division of functions and resources has been based on the principle of efficiency. C. D. Deshmukh warns against ignoring 'the basic fact that the Indian Constitution is not, and was never intended to be, anything even broadly resembling a federation.' He focuses attention on the 'conspicuous fact' that the States 'have deliberately dragged their feet over taxing the larger agricultural incomes, while at the same time retarding the reform of land-tenures and the breaking up of large agricultural holdings'.

Other papers deal with water resources development, health and family planning, role of the Governor, Presidential assent to State Bills and the Central Reserve Police. Inevitably, there is considerable overlapping in the treatment of the subject by various participants but the study in its entirety gives a clear idea of the issues at stake, the underlying causes and possible solutions. The book is an invaluable guide both for those who favour a strong Centre and others who are against any erosion of State autonomy and would want further devolution of authority to the federating units.

Committee, Madras, ix 282 p 1971

There is a rationale behind the Indian Constitution. Whether one agrees with it or not is an entirely different matter.

The framers of the Indian Constitution were much concerned with political stability because of regional diversities and disparities. They sought to combine political stability with economic and social development by giving a sense of central direction to the Indian Constitution. In a developing society, combining the federal and centralizing features of the Constitution is a necessary evil. The whole controversy about the Indian Constitution being a federal one or not will fall into proper perspective in this light.

Unfortunately, the Central-State Relations Enquiry Committee appointed by the Government of Tamil Nadu has sought to gloss over the elementary facts. Whether there can be any justification for the centralization of several activities for the political, economic and social development of the country as a whole is not even mentioned in the report. In hundres of quotations interspersed all over the place, there is not one reference that seems to plead for the other side. The report is an example of the minority complex at its worst.

This is surprising, considering the fact that two of the three members, namely Dr. P. V. Rajamannar and P. Chandra Reddy can boast of a distinguished judicial background. This much can be said in their favour: theirs is like a lawyers case. In places, it gives the impression of an address to the schoolboys debating club.

What the report gains in debating points, it loses in its credibility. It is at times more akin to the D.M.K. political testament vis-a-vis the Central Government. The partisan character of the report is indicated by the introduction written by Rajamannar, with the title of 'Tribute'. The statement concludes with the following paragraph: 'This decision of the popular Chief Minister to constitute the Committee, first of its kind in India, bears testimony to his sagacious statesmanship, dynamic approach to national problems and far-seeing vision. With magnetic personality he has carved for himself, an abiding place in the hearts of millions.' Though the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu may deserve the lavish tributes paid to him, yet such remarks are more appropriate to a welcome address by a smalltown Chairman of a municipality and are certainly not the province of a quasi-judicial commission.

Yet, there can be no quarrel about the basic theme of the report about the extent of autonomy enjoyed by States in the Indian polity. There is also no doubt that the Congress Party, through the instrumentality of the Central Government, has attempted times without number to employ the legality of the Indian Constitution for its political purposes. Institutions like the Planning Commission which do not

find a mention in the Indian Constitution have become powerful at the expense of other institutions like the Finance Commission. There is considerable ment in the argument that the administrative services like the I.A.S. and I.P.S. need to be decentralized. What is wrong with the present report is its way of presenting the argument, which has all the gloss of a clever lawyer's case.

Many of the present-day troubles are attributable to the patchwork character of the Indian Constitution. It has come out of a sieve containing a mixture of many federal constitutions and the Government of India Act of 1935. It combines the several features of centralization and decentralization. wonder so many tomes have already been written ? arguing back and forth about its federal character. While some constitutionalists assert its federal character, others vehemently deny it. The Rajamannar Committee is clear on this score. It would like suitable amendments to be made in the Indian Constitution to make it truly federal. In the ultimate analysis, according to the Committee, the residuary power must rest with the States and not the Centre as hitherto.

The Rajamannar Committee recognizes the federal system under the Constitution as the only basis of Centre-State relations. The spectrum covered by the Committee is very wide: from the administrative, executive and legislative fields to finance, the judiciary, public services and the elections. A claim has also been stacked to resources in the sea bed bordering the State. At the apex is to be the inter-State Council consisting of the Prime Minister and all Chief Ministers which is to consider every 'bill of national importance' before it is presented to Parliament, with its recommendations binding on all. Similarly, the recommendations of the future Finance Commissions are sought to be made binding on all parties. In contrast, the authority of the Planning Commission is made to be diluted. The implementation of its proposals would involve a radical departure from the present practices, not countenanced by the Indian Constitution.

The underlying fear of the use of political authority by the Centre against State Governments underlines the report in its totality. It will be impossible to remove such fears through amendments to the Constitution. Most of the suggestions made by the Committee can be implemented by observing healthy conventions. For instance the delimitation of emergency powers of the Central Government may not prove to be a complete safeguard in the event of a determined misuse of political power. The primacy of the Finance Commission over the Planning Commission may result in the loosening of an all-India perspective in economic development. Enough resources may thus not become available for the purpose of encouraging basic industries. Moreover, backward areas may come to be neglected under the axiom: each one for himself.

In the ultimate analysis, conflicts over the sharing of scarce resources between the Centre and States

are inevitable in a federal system. Political attitudes, cultural traditions and economic interest are bound to conflict in a vast country like India. What matters in the end is whether the conflicts are resolved within the framework of the system or allowed to grow to the extent of undermining it. Let us hope that Tamil Nadu and Bangladesh are quoted in future as representing two diametrically opposed poles.

Girja Kumar

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN INDIA

by Amal Ray, The Asia Publishing House, New York, 1966.

TENSION AREAS IN INDIA'S FEDERAL SYSTEM

by Amal Ray, The World Press Private Limited, Calcutta, 1970.

STATE FINANCES IN INDIA by L. S. Porwal, Sultan Chand and Sons, Delhi. 1971.

Ever since the Constitution of India was framed, there have been discussions taking place whether India is a federal State or not. With the traditionalists, the favourite theme has been to brand India as a quasi-federation for the reason that certain dominant features of the Constitution are not in accord with the character of federalism. Their arguments have rested mainly on three points, viz., (i) broad grants of power to the Centre, (ii) authority of the Centre to interfere in State affairs under Article 249, and (iii) the Centre's power to override the States in times of emergency.

The author believes that although the Centre has been endowed with a broad sweep of authority in the Constitution, the existence of a strong Centre is not inconsistent with the concept of federalism. What is of real significance is whether the Centre and the States ordinarily enjoy substantial autonomy within the spheres delimited by the Constitution. It is well known that the lists in the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution have clearly demarcated these spheres and they are supreme.

Of Ray's two books, the second one is an extension, by way of elaboration of constraints, of the first book published in 1966. With clarity in expression, the author brings home the areas of tension in the present day political system of the country. In the background of a study like this, he has kept the salient provisions of the Constitution in view.

The Parliament is constitutionally empowered to legislate on a matter in the State list in the national interest on the strength of an express resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting. As such, it does not essentially affect the legislative autonomy of the States and can hardly be quoted in support of quasi-federalism in India. The emergency provisions of the Consti-

tution no doubt endow the Gentre with certain overriding powers. However, as Ambedkar had observed, 'these overriding powers do not form the normal feature of the Constitution, and their use and operation are expressly confined to emergencies only.' In any case, the emergency provisions do not interfere in the working of the machinery of the Indian federation in normal times.

Beginning with how the traditional mould of federalism had broken down under the combined impact of social, economic and political forces, the author takes us through the legislative, administrative and financial relations between the Centre and the States in the governance of the country. It has been pointed out that the approach of traditionalists is basically wrong when they do not take into account the fact of differences in social situations. It is not the perpetual mood of revolt of the States against the Centre, but their spirit to assert themselves on crucial issues, which is really the index of the federal spirit.' The growing self-consciousness and self-assertiveness of the State governments, strengthened by the reorganisation of the States on a unilingual basis, has acted as an important decentralising force in India.

The irresistible conclusion drawn is that India is a federation in both constitutional theory and practice. The dominant spirit is, however, not one of competitive federalism but essentially of a cooperative federalism. The problems of the Indian federation primarily emanate from an imperative need for the integrated development of the country at an accelerated pace in a multilingual federal system, the component units of which sharply vary in size, population and in the levels of economic and cultural growth.

An interesting observation is that apart from the general dissatisfaction of the non-Hindi speaking regions against the Centre in India, the Centre is controlled by the Hindi-speaking regions, particularly Uttar Pradesh, in order to 'manipulate the central machinery to promote the aim of establishing their domination over the rest of India. I wonder if this observation of the author could be justified on the basis of the Central Government's treatment meted out to the different States. Attention is also focussed on friction between different regions, each of which is dominated by a homogeneous language group. The fissiparous tendency is explained in terms of a deep sense of neglect and resentment ending up in linguistic agitations and riots. The centrifugal forces have, however, not been successful so far by any stretch of the imagination.

There is no doubt that the inter-regional jealousies and rivalries and Centre-region tensions create profound strains in the operative machinery of the Indian federation. Linguistic regionalism did emerge in India as a powerful lobby for securing as much spoils of development as possible for a particular region, and regional needs are constantly pressed at the expense of over-all national needs. The regional pulls and pressures tend to distort the choice of priorities and locations Tension between the Centre and the regions, and between regions inter se have, at times, tended

to sap the emergent spirit of cooperative federalism in India.

To counter the effects of regional disharmonies which are in evidence, regional balance in economic and cultural development should be achieved. The choice of priorities and location of big industrial projects, must be governed by economic considerations but the danger is that this might widen, instead of reduce, regional disparities. As such, greater reliance has to be placed on the development of small industries, the improving of agriculture and more accent on community development programmes.

In sum, the aims of federalism and planning have to be harmonised, for the failure of planning will put the federal structure under severe strain. On the basis of recent political developments, the author expresses his apprehension that the regional consensus is more powerful than the national consensus. Consequently, the orderly operation of Centre-State relations is enormously difficult. The emergence of a multi-party system in India did give a new dimension to the whole concept of decentralisation of authority. But, again, after the 1971-1972 elections we must keep our fingers crossed

State Finances in India by L. S. Porwal is a case study of the finances of the State of Rajasthan which was formed in 1949 by the amalgamation of the then princely States and, therefore, relevant to the issue under discussion. The twelve chapters of the book are competent, well-knit, and provide valuable statistical data derived from various government publications. A period of twenty years, from 1949-50 to 1969-70, has been taken for this study to highlight and analyse the ramifications of the income and expenditure of the State.

After a brief review of the financial position of the then princely States, mention is made of the evolution of the pattern of financial relations between the Union and the State of Rajasthan. As for the revenue of the State, it increased from Rs. 1,461 lakhs in 1950-51 to Rs. 16,697 lakhs in 1969-70, thus registering an increase of 1043 per cent over 1950-51. Along with this rise, the income per capita in Rajasthan also registered an increase of 104 per cent from Rs. 233 in 1954-55 to Rs. 475 in 1967-68. Still, however, deficit on revenue account has been an important characteristic of the State which had consequently to depend increasingly on the financial assistance from the Centre to implement its socio-economic programmes envisaged in the five year plans. Today, Rajasthan is the State which has taken the highest amount of overdraft from the Reserve Bank.

Land revenue along with the agricultural incometax seems to be the only potential source for augmenting the income of the State. But, with the heavy arrears of land revenue which the government finds it difficult to realise, the prospects are none-too-happy. Where, after all, is the rub? The author answers that "The most marked deficiency is the terrible shortage of men of integrity devoted to the cause of the people." A clean and efficient administrative

machinery is needed for setting the house in order. The present maladministration has resulted in over-dependence of the State on the Centre for loans. The increasing burden of debt-servicing is now a real cause for concern and a serious threat to future financial stability, as most of the borrowed money has gone down the drain—invested as it is in projects which are not in a position to pay off even interest charges.

A significant revelation of the study is that unfortunately the efficiency of the administrative machinery has always been judged on the basis of achieving the targets of total expenditure budgeted for a particular year without any regard to its productivity. At the same time, the increase in idle investment of government funds, faulty planning, inordinate delay in accepting tenders, embezzlement of government money and material, incurring of wasteful expenditure, neglect of normal checks and the like are indicative of ineffective government control over public spending.

The problem thus boils down to three basic issues, viz., (a) the problem of increasing the State Revenue, (b) optimum use of the resources at the disposal of the State, and (c) problem of financial administration and discipline.

Certain suggestions have been made to increase the revenue of the State. For example, a graded tax structure in the system of land revenue may be applied, betterment levy be imposed, auction sale of government irrigated land be undertaken, water rates for irrigation be enhanced, arrears of land revenue rigorously realised and so on. However, the question is: will political wisdom allow the government to go ahead with these measures?

On the expenditure side, the demands of economic growth and social justice have to be kept in mind. Consequently, the resources of the State should be put to optimum use. For this purpose, as many as ten policy prescriptions have been provided by the author. Similarly, in the matter of financial discipline, a plea is made to avoid the policy of presenting deficit budgets as also the tendency to depend on overdrafts from the Reserve Bank. Further, 'To lessen the burden of debt-servicing on general revenues, efforts should be made to make the investments yield adequate returns. . . There is need to mop up the surplus that has flowed into the hands of large agriculturists to achieve a satisfactory rate of growth.' In any case, it is true that States in general have now to depend more upon their own internal resources to finance their projects and plans.

It is also important to note that the different Finance Commissions have so far adopted varying criteria for giving grants-in-aid to States. As a substantial portion (more than two-thirds) of the grant to Rajasthan has been discretionary in nature, the State had to depend to a considerable extent upon the Centre. In the ultimate analysis, such excessive dependence has diluted the financial autonomy of the State although the State itself may not worry about it. Let us hope the sixth Finance Commission, which has yet to be constituted, will give due consideration to removing

the anomalies and will rationalise the basis for grants to States along with a fair distribution of the share in the divisible pool of taxes. In such an attempt, the necessary consideration would be one of bringing about harmony of interests between the Union and the States and amongst the States themselves.

Navin Chandra Joshi

THE CENTRE AND THE STATES by Subrata

Sarkar, Academi Publishers; Calcutta 1972.

In spite of the long drawn-out controversy over 'decentralisation', it is interesting to find that the quest for a solution to the problem is sought within a traditional frame-work. Political parties, such as the DMK, the Akalis and the Communists, who are among the first to agitate for provincial autonomy, have provided no real alternative to the existing state of affairs. This perhaps may be due to the elitist composition of the political parties and the bourgeoisie that they represent. They continue to see the problem of decentralisation in terms of a transfer of power from the national elite based in New Delhi to the various States' elites—that is, to themselves.

Subrata Sarkar's book, The Centre and the States, falls in this category. It is Sarkar's contention that there is no dichotomy between strong States and a strong Centre. According to him, 'a strong Centre is indispensable for the development of the States. . . strong States do not undermine the foundations of the strong Centre . . . what the country needs today is the balanced development of the Centre and the States'. Though Sarkar states that political parties must take into consideration the aspirations of the minorities and the economically backward classes, he does not develop this theme at all.

The provisions of the Constitution which regulate Centre-State relations are of great interest to Sarkar. Large sections of the book are devoted to this rather dry matter and an endless number of Articles of the Constitution, its sub-clauses and various Acts are quoted. He makes extensive use of some studies undertaken on the subject and particularly the report of the various Finance Commissions. The main shortcoming of the book is the lack of analysis. Take for example the report of the Rajamannar Committee on Centre-State relations. The author spells out in detail the recommendations of the report but no attempt is made to analyse them critically. Instead, he takes the easy recourse of documenting some reactions to the Committee's report; even this is sketchy and unsatisfying

The book was published in 1972, yet the split of Pakistan into two sovereign independent States finds no mention. Obviously, the fundamental lesson of this split is lost on Sarkar. He confidently states that, 'I have not felt any necessity to change my basic approach to the problems of Centre-State relationships'.

To be fair, it must be stated that several prominent intellectuals, leading bureaucrats and politicians continue to warn against more autonomy to the States. The lessons of Bangladesh have not been properly understood. To solve the problem of decentralisation by a proportional dispersal of power between the Centre and the States is inadequate. This would only result in the strengthening of another centre of exploitation and domination. It would then be the State elite which would undermine the local communities and sub cultures. For example, the ruling elite in Uttar Pradesh which comes from the Western regions would be further strengthened and the backward regions of Eastern U.P. would continue to starve for funds. This is already happening in most of the States and the process will only get accentuated by such a move.

Any meaningful effort at decentralisation must begin from the base. We must focus on the Panchayat, Panchayat Samities, Zıla Parishads, the Municipalities and Municipal Corporations. Sarkar's is basically an elitist approach for the base finds no mention in the volume except in the most peripheral way.

Tejbir Singh

CENTRESTATERELATIONS:Reportof theAdministrativeReformsCommission:NewDelhi, June 1969.

As a result of the preachings and influence of pre-Independence leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, many principles have become a part of the present day Indian pantheon of gods. Focusing attention on 'Daridra Narayan'—as Gandhiji used to put it—or 'Garibi Hatao' in current parlance, and Panchayati Raj or decentralised functioning of the State were two prominent ones among such principles. It is not necessary to emphasise that principles like these are treated exactly like gods in the pantheon—much vocal worship is unctuously offered in their name, but in actual policy making and administrative practice, they are largely ignored.

The Constituent Assembly largely modelled the Indian Constitution on the Government of India Act of 1935. Little thought was given to the actual political, economic or social requirements, or to the objectives that the country had placed before itself. The result was that while matters like social justice were relegated to Directive Principles, property was enshrined as a legally enforceable Fundamental Right. Similarly, in the whole arrangement of Centre-State Relations, the British-established tradition of tipping the scales disproportionately in favour of the Centre was maintained, so much so that some students of comparative constitutions express doubt whether the Union of India can properly be called a federation at all!

In its actual working during the last 20 years or so, both centrifugal and centripetal forces have been in operation. On the one hand, there was the movement for linguistic States, which succeeded in spite

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of the efforts by the strongly entrenched Central political leadership and administrative and industrial elites who opposed it. On the other hand, for a major part of this period, a single political party was in power at the Centre and in almost all the States, and for a significant part of this period, the party was dominated by one or two strong Central leaders. The organisation of economic planning for development from 1951 further strengthened the already existing dominance of Central authority over the States and the growth of the economy also contributed to increasing the financial dominance of the Centre.

The dominant position of the Centre remained largely unchallenged till about 1960. A number of factors led however to the development of a challenge since then. Nehru's declining leadership, especially after the events of 1962, the failure of the third plan, the many economic difficulties which the country faced between 1963 and 1967, and the political interregnum between 1964 and 1969, all these contributed to the tendency on the part of the States to assert their independence of the Centre. The coming into power of a number of non-Congress governments in the States after the election of 1967, combined with the weakening of the hold of the Congress Party even at the Centre, brought the whole question of Centre-State relations into further prominence.

It was, thus, in the nature of things as they stood then that the Administrative Reforms Commission, which worked mainly from 1966 to 1969, should give considerable attention to this problem. A study team on Centre-State Relations prepared an elaborate report on the subject. Moreover, many other study teams appointed by the ARC, especially those which examined the machinery for planning, financial administration, personnel administration and the machinery of the Central Government, gave much thought to this matter. The ARC's own report on Centre-State relations attempts to take a view of the problem based on the report and studies of all these various study teams.

The report of the study team on Centre-State relations, headed by a senior public figure like M. C. Setalvad, sharply brings into focus the ambivalence in the thinking of many Indians on this problem. On the one side, it is felt that in a vast country like India, with its diversity of peoples and resources, regional authorities like States must have considerable autonomy if the difficult and urgent task of bringing about social and economic development is to be adequately carried out. At the same time, there is the fear of parochialism as also of overpoliticalisation and shortsightedness in the decision making of democratically elected political authorities in the States. The result is a curious mixture of recommendations with emphasis on decentralisation on the one side and on reducing the States' discretion on the other.

The study team thus points out that the financial powers and allotments to the States are quite inadequate to meet their requirements for the important areas in their sphere of activity such as the main-

tenance of law and order, agriculture, transport, power, education and health. The resulting dependence on the Centre leads to undue Central interference which is said to have no justification and utility. Various recommendations are made to counteract this.

At the same time, recommendations are made to reduce the area of discretion of the State authorities in matters like the appointment of High Court Judges, Members of Public Service Commissions, etc., and it is almost suggested that these matters should more or less remain under the Central authorities, the assumption being that there would be less emphasis on political considerations at the Centre as compared to the States. There is similarly an emphasis on all-India Services which would be free of State authorities' control as an important instrument for efficient administration. In effect, this is not very dis-similar from the approach of the planning and administrative authorities at the Centre that Delhi usually, if not always, knows better!

Leaving aside certain peculiarities in the report of the ARC such as the initial paragraphs of Chapter II in its report on Centre-State Relations (these have a distinct flavour of their own),* the basic approach of the report can be said to be very logical. It was clearly stated that the basic feature of the Indian Union—that of a centralised Union—was not to be changed. But the approach adopted was that, within this broad framework, undue Central dominance and interference in matters substantially allotted to the States' jurisdiction should be reduced and the States should be free to work in their own spheres largely according to their own understanding of the problems faced by them.

While it is not possible to go into the many detailed recommendations made in the ARC report on Centre-State relations and other related reports on the subject, two among these may be specifically mentioned in the context of the present theme.

One recommendation was that the role of the Central ministries and departments dealing with subjects falling within the State list was to be severely circumscribed. The Centre was mainly to play the role of 'pioneer, guide, disseminator of information and overall planner and evaluator.' Otherwise, the

^{* &#}x27;India has always been a distinct entity from time immemorial. The Indian Ocean and its two arms, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea in the south and the great Himalayan range in the North have given it an enduring shape Eastern and Western boundaries on the North of this vast land mass have sometimes fluctuated Deeper and far-reaching bonds of unity than the seas and the mountains have been at work in sprittial and cultural levels of society in India. Political changes have continuously been taking place without affecting this deeper and more abiding unity'.

^{&#}x27;In so far as recorded history is concerned, kings, emperors and rulers have often nursed the ambition of integrating the whole of India under a single political power ... the British, who arrived last on the scene, succeeded in establishing their empire covering the whole of India. Their political approach was one "live and let live" and, therefore, they allowed more than 500 governments in the form of Indian States to continue. Though the political pattern was not as homogenous as we have under our present Constitution, the suzerainty of one power operated throughout the length and breadth of India'

items of work in these fields now handled by the Central agencies but not fulfilling the criterion indicated should be transferred to the States. One can easily see how important a recommendation this was, but also how difficult for Central authorities to accept and implement. The experience of the last three years amply indicates that while such a recommendation can be accepted in principle, vested interests—both political and administrative—at the Centre cannot but defeat its implementation.

Regarding the economic sphere, the main problems to which attention had been focussed time and again by independent scholars, and also by the Administrative Reforms Commission's own study teams were that regular and to some extent non-discretionary assistance from the Centre to the States based on the recommendations of the Finance Commission had come to be far less important than Plan assistance, and that this latter was almost entirely discretionary. The States were thus put almost at the mercy of the Centre for an increasingly large part of their over-all financial requirements, and specially the requirements of development finance.

As a result of the strong financial position of the Centre, the States authority and autonomy even in subjects which were within their sphere under the Constitution had been significantly reduced. Central authorities through schematic assistance related to specific patterns of expenditure, and centrally sponsored schemes, were almost in a position to lay down the law for the States not only in the matter of broad priorities but regarding many details of projects and programmes—their formulation and implementation. This was not useful from the point of view of effectively meeting the States' developmental requirements, nor did it help to develop a sense of earnestness and responsibility among the State authorities.

The manner of providing assistance, specially the disbursement of Miscellaneous Development Loans on a very large scale irrespective of whether they were to be utilised for productive schemes or not, had also led to a rapidly increasing burden of indebtedness of the States to the Centre. Even the servicing of these loans in the case of some States had come to be related to the availability of further Central assistance. This was hardly calculated to create an atmosphere in the States which would encourage proper long term developmental policies.

The ARC in its reports on the Machinery for Planning as well as in the report on Center-State Relations made very useful recommendations to meet this situation. It insisted that the distribution of plan assistance among States should be related to certain over-all criteria or guidelines and not continue to be discretionary to the extent it was in the past. Except in a small number of nationally important development programmes, schematic assistance should be avoided; and the number of centrally sponsored schemes should be drastically reduced.

As a corollary to this, it was emphasised that the planning competence in the States must be rapidly

improved so as to enable the State authorities effectively to benefit from these changes. It was suggested that loans should be given only for productive schemes and non-productive schemes should be covered by capital grants. The ARC however did not support the recommendation of one of its study teams, that on Financial Administration, for the creation of a National Development Bank for administering project loans. It did suggest that the whole question of the States' indebtedness to the Centre and its impact on State finances should be examined by an expert committee.

One may doubt whether the ARC recommendations as such resulted in some of the changes that have been effected in these spheres in the last few years. But there is no doubt that a few welcome changes have taken place. Schematic assistance and centrally sponsored schemes have been drastically curtailed and the Planning Commission has made a serious effort to distribute Central plan assistance on the basis of generally agreed guidelines. It was however observed that certain States might face intractable financial problems if Central assistance was distributed purely on this basis. The result was that other-discretionary-means of assistance had again to be set up. The whole question of State indebtedness has now been assigned for examination to the new Finance Commission. Incidentally, in the appointment of the new Finance Commission, one of the recommendations of the ARC, viz., about appointing one of the the Members of the Planning Commission as a Member of the Finance Commission. has also been implemented.

Most of the basic questions and problems however remain practically where they were. In spite of what was suggested by the ARC and later emphasised by the Planning Commission, few States have succeeded in setting up a planning machinery and building up expertise which would make it possible for local programmes, projects and policies to be properly formulated and included in the well-balanced framework of a State plan. The shortsightedness and inadequate sense of financial rectitude shown by practically all the States, as seen in the continuously mounting overdrafts, is another indication that decentralisation is difficult not merely due to the upwillingness of the Centre but also the political as well as administrative ineptitude at the State level. It would of course not be correct to say that these latter deficiencies are to be found only at the State level and that the Centre is free of them.

In any case, looking at what has happened since the ARC submitted its various reports relating to Centre State relations, these appear in retrospect to be no land-marks or watersheds, but merely one effort among many others, throwing some light on the problem and indicating some useful measures, but largely remaining unused, unimplemented and thus unfruitful.

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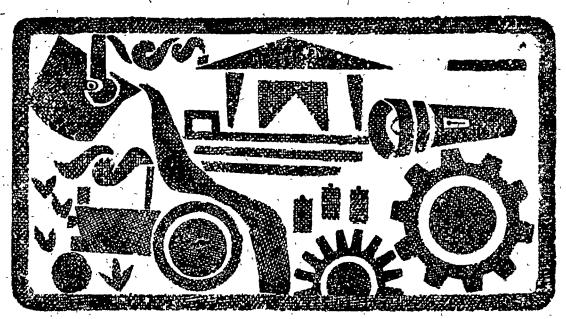
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Communication

Despite his caution in 'treading on treacherous ground', Dr. Gopal Krishna has allowed certain inconsistancies in his article 'Muslim Politics' (SEMINAR, May 1972), and he has tried to stretch certain ideas beyond their eclectic limit. For example, on page 20, he begins his paragraph by saying 'We know very little about how Muslims have voted in these or previous elections, what governs their voting decisions. . .' On page 21, in the second column, he begins the paragraph 'The 1972 elections have demonstrated that despite the virulent opposition of the Muslim sectarians, Muslim voters have voted in large numbers for the Congress'.

On page 20, column 3, Dr. Krishna compares the total number of 'Muslim contestants' in the 1972 election as against 1967 and arrives at a hasty conclusion. Just because there was a marginal increase in the number of Muslim contestants from 1967 to 1972, one simply cannot say that Muslims were getting involved more and more in the country's politics. Is this not tantamount to saying that any section of the people (community)—religious or otherwise—is not involved in the politics of the country, for the simple reason that it has no candidates in the 'field'?

Probably, a better measure of the 'involvement' would be to look at the percentage of the voters, belonging to a particular community, who actually exercised their franchise.

Moreover, growth (negative or positive) is a natural phenomenon. When the 'whole' grows, a part of the whole must necessarily grow. Here the point of interest, however, would be whether the growth of the 'part' is proportional to the 'general' growth. Is it more, less or the same as the general growth? Here, however, one would face the difficulty of electoral adjustments.

After the 1967 election, both the major opposition parties and the ruling Congress, sought electoral adjustments with other 'like' minded parties, to strengthen themselves. These adjustments left fewer parties in the field. Unless these factors are taken into account, one is not likely to get a clear picture of the general growth in the number of contestants.

Secondly, all the political parties, have realised how weighty these Muslim 'electoral pockets' are. Every party—secular or non-secular—knows fully well that in many a constituency, the 'Muslim vote' plays the role of decider. This being the case, is it surprising to see every party vying with every other party

to field Muslim candidates so far as possible in these Muslim pockets? The situation is being exploited by parties and individuals. Under these circumstances, to say, 'This could be taken as a measure of growing involvement and perhaps trust, in democratic politics' is being needlessly optimistic.

As Dr. Gopal Krishna rightly points out, partition of the sub-continent left the Muslim political leaders in this portion of the sub-continent with three alternatives, viz., (1) to support the Congress Party, (2) to organise Muslim political parties and (3) to distribute Muslim support among different political parties.

Naturally enough, the then Muslim leaders went in for the first alternative. But Dr. Gopal Krishna is not quite correct when he says that 'this phase' ended after 1962.

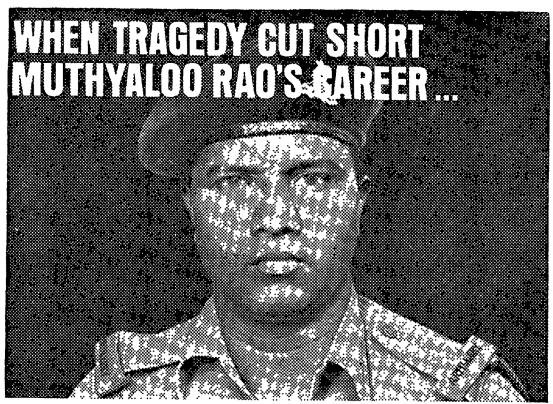
Around 1962, many changes took place in the political arena. The Congress started losing its group and mass appeal. New parties entered the scene, existing parties started getting a better foothold. After reviewing the situation, these Muslim leaders thought it wise and profitable (and rightly so) to take recourse to the second and third alternatives in these changed circumstances. This decision of the Muslim leaders did pay dividends. But, unfortunately, this was not to continue for long.

In the late sixties the 'Bangladesh Problem' started brewing. One more partition of the sub-continent was being talked of. In many ways, this possibility of a second partition of the country placed the Indian Muslims more or less in the same 'not so happy' position, as in the case of the first partition. For them many things were at stake.

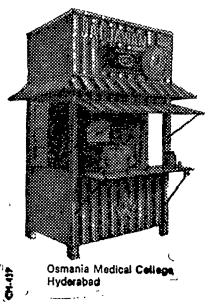
The decision of the Congress Government to back the 'Bangla cause' and the subsequent events, forced the Muslim leaders back to the first alternative—the Congress fold (the rout of the Muslim league in West Bengal stands as evidence). This was a very safe move. And there we are back in the first post-partition political scene.

In conclusion, the Muslim political leaders have been playing the game of politics more intelligently, deftly and honestly, than their Hindu counterparts, using their aces at the right moment and in the right way. They have been playing safely, yet profitably. Hats off to them.

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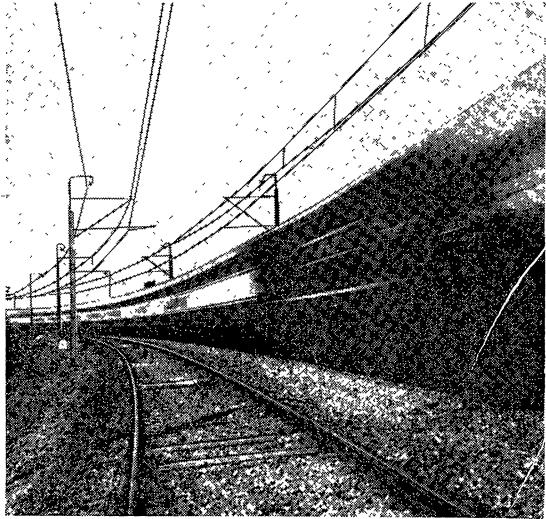
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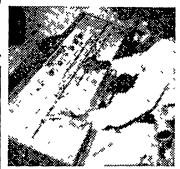
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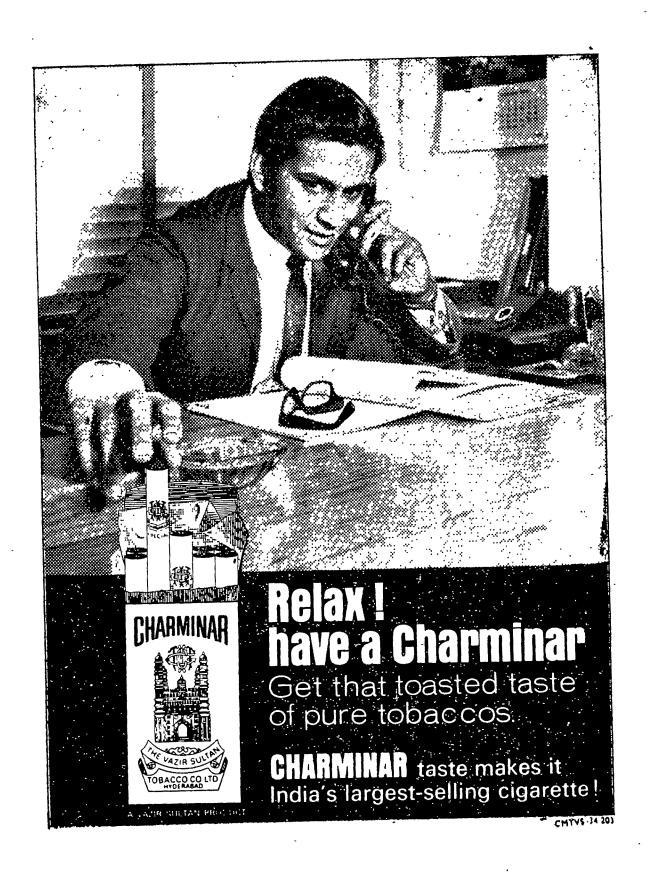
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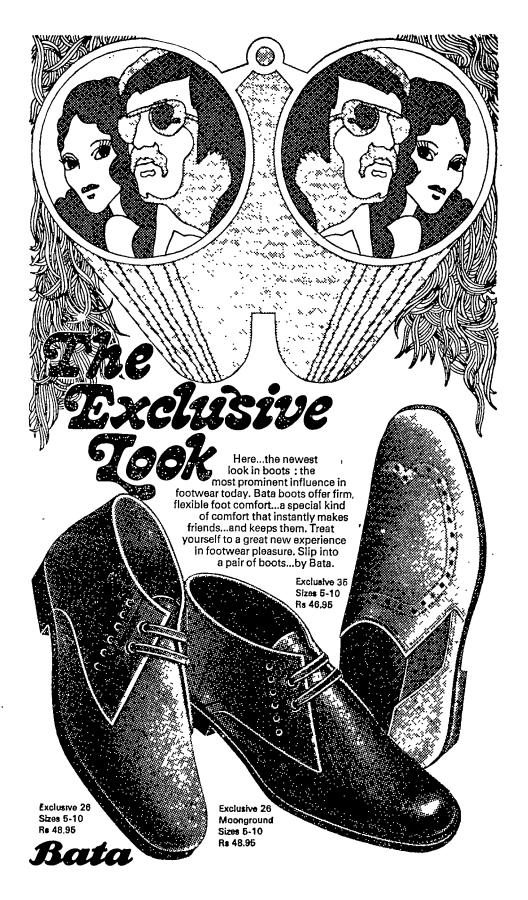
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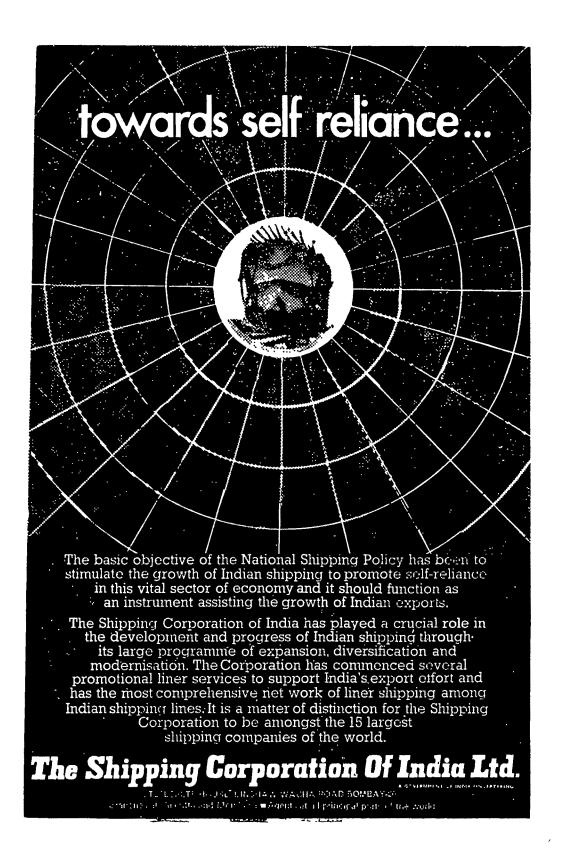
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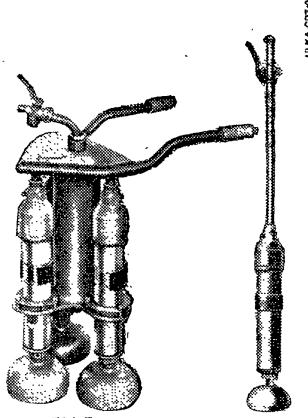
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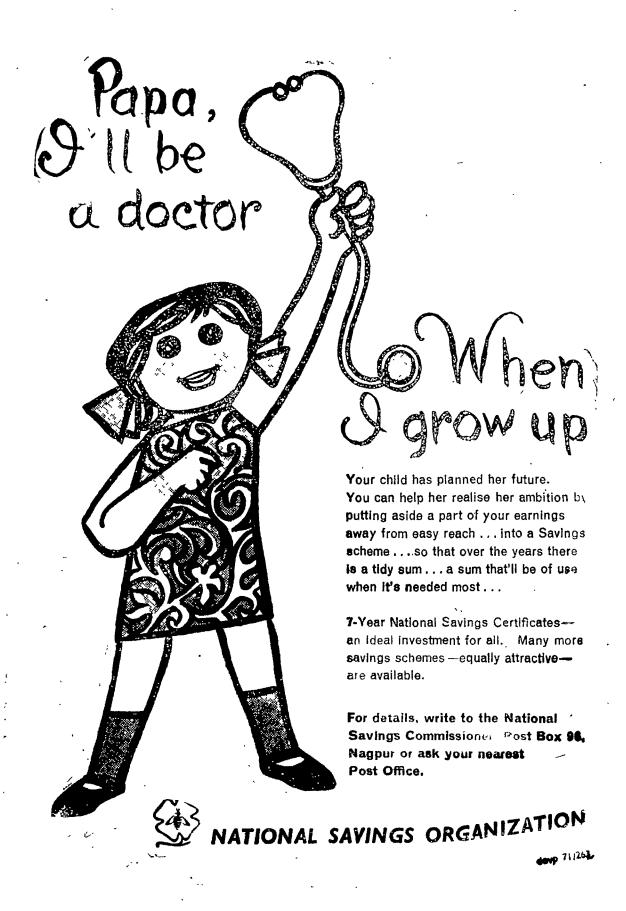
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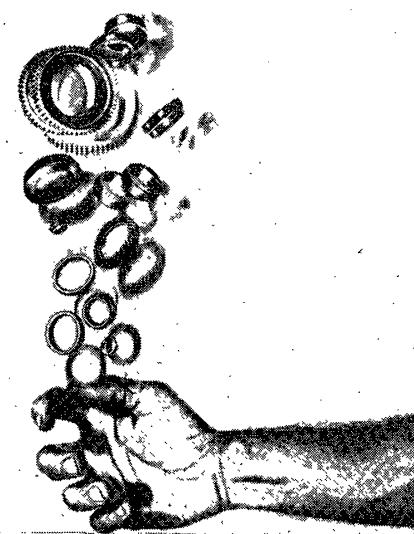
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The problem

IN the twenty-five years since independence, and particularly during the last decade, the social sciences have come to make their presence increasingly felt in this country. They are no longer confined to the universities. Many centres of research and study in the social sciences have grown up under various types of sponsorship. Some people have viewed these developments with enthusiasm and others with misgiving. Perhaps the majority have not made up their minds as to whether what is happening is good or bad. In these circumstances it may be useful to raise a few questions on the place of the social sciences in the life of this country.

The social sciences are not all of the same kind. They differ in their theories and methods and also in the kinds of facts they collect. Some, like economics, have developed much in the way of formal theory; others, like sociology, concentrate more on the collection and interpretation of facts. Again, history and social anthropology differ greatly in their methods of collecting facts and to some extent in the types of interpretations they offer. If we assume for the moment that all these different disciplines have some social function, then clearly they do not all have the same kind of function.

The different disciplines have developed at unequal rates. Some, like economics, have developed much more rapidly than others. While it is important to remember this, too much should not be made of these time lags in the development of the different disciplines. One often hears sociologists say that their discipline can solve the same kinds of problems as economics, only it has not been in the field long enough. This is

probably an illusion. Historians (or political theorists) do not solve the same kinds of problems as economists, and they have been in the field much longer.

Two issues which would appear to be of immediate concern are those of quality and of relevance. These are both complex issues and each raises a number of difficult questions. Is the quality of the social sciences improving or stagnating? If we are to judge the quality of our products, what kinds of standards should we use? Perhaps we should judge our research not merely by its quality but also by its relevance to the society in which we live. What kinds of criteria of relevance should we then adopt? Further, who is to decide what is relevant?

I raise these questions at the outset to indicate that the relationship between quality and relevance is at best ambiguous. Not very long ago, what seemed to concern people most about the state of the social sciences was their quality. It was often said that the quality of our social sciences was not good enough or that it was not catching up fast enough with international standards. It could be shown fairly easily that international standards are not always a reliable measure of every type of activity. So, people turned to relevance and began to argue that our work in the social sciences must be judged by its relevance. However, it may be unwise to assume that the measure of relevance is any more self-evident than is the measure of quality.

Perhaps, the easiest way of determining relevance is in relation to planning and policy-making. Many of the subjects we are discussing are in fact described by some as the policy sciences. It

is well known that expertise in the social sciences is being directly used in planning and policy-making, particularly in countries like India. What can the social sciences contribute to these processes? Should their social function be assessed solely or even primarily in terms of their contribution to planning and policy-making? These questions acquire particular urgency in the light of current discussions on priorities in social science research. Should these priorities be determined in terms of the needs of planning and policy-making?

Among the social sciences economics is believed to occupy a pre-eminent position as a policy science, and people working in other disciplines are sometimes advised to take economics as their model. There is no doubt that the areas of planning and policy-making on which economists can give expert advice are many. Their role in public life has been greatly enlarged since the country embarked on a programme of economic planning shortly after independence. One notices this concern for planning and policy-making among economists at every level, from professional experts to undergraduate students. Some of it has rubbed off on the other social sciences since planning can be conceived broadly to include not just economic matters but also the wider social and political reality.

Not everyone is equally enthusiastic about the contribution which the social scientists have actually made to planning and policy-making. Many would argue that if they have a role to play in these matters, they have until now played it inadequately. The entire planning machinery and the role of the experts in it have been criticised for their many inadequacies—and the critics in-

clude eminent economists. It has been said that if this country has achieved any economic advance, the economists have contributed little to it.

To be critical of the performance of the economist is not necessarily to suggest an alternative role for him. Economists do in fact criticise each other on a variety of grounds—for being immersed in formal and abstract problems, for not having the proper methodology, or for not being sufficiently empirical. But if one examines these criticisms closely one will find that what is being most often attacked is the lack of an effective approach to the problem of economic development. The search for such an approach whose application would yield results of practical value would be regarded by most as both reasonable and desirable.

When we turn to some of the other social sciences, for instance, sociology, we find that not only the performance of these disciplines but also their role may be viewed in a different light. While the majority of economists—at least in this country—regard their discipline as being of direct value in the solution of at least some kinds of concrete, practical problems, the sociologists would be much more divided among themselves on a question of this nature. And if we take history and political science then, clearly, we are dealing with disciplines whose social function will lie in their being able to do something other than solving concrete, practical problems.

The case of sociology is especially interesting because it seems not to have been able to make up its mind as to what kind of role it should create for itself. There are first of all those sociologists who would like to see their discipline being associated closely and directly with the processes of planning and national development. They would seek affinity with the economist and see their role as being quite different from that of the historian or the philosopher. Some of them would like to describe their work as social engineering.

There are various reasons why sociologists might like to play this kind of role. At the level of values, there would be the satisfaction of contributing in a useful way to a wider social purpose; very few ends are more noble than those of national development. At the level of interests, it is this kind of role which would enable them to command the largest resources; social scientists are no more free than others from the common human weakness for material gain.

Let us concede in principle that sociologists can contribute directly to the solution of specific practical problems. We would then expect them to recommend the selection of some problems of study more than others. They would be problems like community development, caste tensions and family planning. These could all be described as social problems and not just sociological problems.

Studies have in fact been made of all the three problems mentioned above—and many others during the last two decades, and they have thrown some light on certain aspects of our society. But it is doubtful whether they have yielded any results of substantial practical value. Some sociologists would indeed argue that studies of this kind are generally wasteful if they are designed to arrive at concrete policy recommendations; such recommendations could be reached more easily by the application of common sense to the facts more or less carefully observed. It is not that sociologists never make useful recommendations, but, rather, that anyone with average administrative experience and average intelligence might make similar recommendations although he might not be able to back them up by using the appropriate technical language.

We then come to those sociologists who view their discipline not as social engineering but as a vehicle for arriving at a more critical understanding of the society in which they live. Such a role is more akin to the role of history or of philosophy. The study of history tells us about the past so that we may understand the present a little better. The study of philosophy tells us about problems which have worried people in all ages and in all societies without any final solution being found for them. In each society these problems take their own specific forms. Perhaps we shall never be able to find solutions for all of them; but this does not mean that we should not worry about them.

If sociologists conceive of their function in this way, i.e., not as social engineering but as critical understanding, then they might emphasize the study of a somewhat different range of problems. Instead of studying community development, caste tensions or tamily planning, they might study social inequality, the meaning of ritual or the forms of kinship. Obviously, the study of kinship may be of some indirect practical value, but the main justification for studying, say, the forms of the joint family cannot be that it will contribute directly to planning for national development.

To engage in the task of critical understanding is not to play the role of the disinterested bystander. By analysing the forms and functions of social institutions, the sociologist can help people to gain a deeper insight into the true nature of the constraints under which they live. He can also help them to understand better what choices are open to them and what price has to be paid for every choice they make. If this be the case, then the sociologist does not construct a new society as the engineer constructs a bridge; he only contributes to the awareness out of which people create their own society.

It would thus appear that the social sciences might perform at least two different functions, those of social engineering and of critical understanding. Among the social sciences, economics might concentrate more on social engineering although political economy in the wider sense of the term has much to contribute to critical understanding. History and political science would contribute to critical understanding rather than social engineering. Sociology and social anthropology might contribute a little to both.

Another set of questions would relate to the consumers and the audience of the social scientist. For whom does the social scientist write? To whom should he be accountable and by whom is his work to be judged?

In one sense every social scientist, to the extent that he writes as a scholar, writes for his profession. Very often the first fruits of his research appear as papers in professional journals or as monographs which are usually published in limited editions. Professional journals and research monographs are nowhere meant to be read by the general public. They are addressed to a body of specialists and their quality can be judged only by specialists and according to professional standards.

It is a truism that professional standards do not remain fixed for ever but change over time. What is more important from our point of view is that they also differ greatly from one country to another. This has been a cause for anxiety in countries such as ours where professional standards are sometimes well below what are called international standards but are in effect the standards prevalent in the advanced countries. Should the social scientist

pursue problems of research which he considers relevant and interesting without concern for the highest professional standards; or should he seek to attain the highest international standards without concern for the nature and significance of the problems he investigates? No easy answer can be found to this question but, clearly, at one level the social scientist will be accountable to his profession, in whatever terms he defines it.

The social scientist does not of course write only for his profession. Were he to do so there would hardly be any point in talking about the social functions of his work. Although the standards of the social scientist's work will be assessed by his professional colleagues, its relevance will probably have to be judged by a larger audience or, at least, in relation to it.

Besides addressing himself to his profession, the social scientist might also address himself to government. He might work directly for government or orientate his work to the requirements of government. Alternatively, he might work for some other organization like an industry or a religious body. Since the problems in these cases are to some extent similar, I will consider only what happens when the social scientist works for government or orientates his work to the requirements of government.

Social scientists in this country have become increasingly dependent on government for sponsoring their research. This dependence has grown rapidly with the growth of planning for economic development and social welfare. Economists occupy a special position among social scientists for they are the ones whose expert services are most in demand and for the widest range of occasions. Social anthropologists and sociologists have also sought to make their services increasingly available to government. In the present climate many people have begun to feel that the measure of importance of a social science is the extent to which its services are sought by government.

In a country such as ours the relationship between government and the social sciences is likely to be both complex and subtle, and it is of the utmost importance that the nature of this relationship be clearly understood and widely discussed. It would be fair to say that in India, government has not sought to dominate the social science professions directly. But this would be small consolation if these professions were to reduce themselves to client status of their own accord. The danger of too close a relationship between them and government is that such a relationship is by its nature asymmetrical.

One way in which these professions might reduce themselves to client status is by having their priorities of research determined by government. There are certain types of research which government might need to have done urgently, and it would only be fair for the social scientist to

offer his services in such cases. But this is different from determining the priorities of research in general.

There are various ways in which government might have a hand in setting up the priorities of research. These might be determined by governmental committees or by committees of independent experts set up under governmental sponsorship. The line between dependent and independent experts is likely to be thin, particularly when all or most such experts have to depend for financial support on government. And if the main objective of social science research is critical understanding it is difficult to see by what right any committee of experts—dependent or independent—can determine priorities of research for others.

The urge to be of help to government cannot be lightly dismissed although it is often misconceived. In countries like India there are many programmes of social change which can be initiated only by government. But this is not all. There are aspects of our society—poverty, inequality, communalism—in which most of us would like to see changes; and many would like to make their own contributions to these changes. Clearly, it would be a strange view for the social scientist to take that only those changes are worth having in a society which can be brought about by government.

Social scientists who take a different view of social change and what they might contribute to it would address themselves not to government but to the public. The term 'public' is not easy to define and one might well ask how the social scientist is to address himself to the public in a country where over half the people are illiterate. This would be to take a pedantic approach to the problem. In no society is the public a fixed category and it is partly up to the social scientist not only to contribute to the formation of public opinion but also to extend the range of public participation in national debates. It is in this sense that the social scientist holds himself ultimately accountable to the public.

The two ways of viewing the function of the social scientist discussed in the last section are probably related to the two ways of viewing his responsibility discussed in the present one. The social scientist who views his function as social engineering is the one who is most likely to hold himself accountable to government; to contribute effectively to social engineering one must have access to vast financial resources and even the research on which it is based is likely to be expensive. By contrast, those who view their contribution as critical understanding are likely to define their larger responsibility in relation to the public rather than government.

A third set of problems relates to the funding and organization of research. Here again one could distinguish two styles of research based on two patterns of organization. One hears frequently that research in the social sciences is becoming more and more expensive so that we might soon reach a state where no research worth the name will be possible without large-scale financial support. Many people feel that this is the direction in which the social sciences are moving in this country. We must ask ourselves whether this development is inevitable and whether any attempt to check it is necessary or desirable.

Today, the social scientist who embarks on a career of research tends increasingly to view his work as a project or a series of projects. This seems to be a response to the growth of agencies and organizations which are taking over what may be described as the management of research. In the last century there were some who foresaw a time when teaching and research would be done by separate sets of persons. We seem to be approaching a stage where the management of research becomes a new occupation, different from and generally enjoying more authority and prestige than research itself.

A research project requires to be organized. It must have a budget and a time schedule and it must produce tangible results usually in the form of a report. Those who undertake projects must adjust themselves to a certain pace of work. Here one can observe a certain pattern. When a research worker undertakes a new project, he is almost always able to assure himself that he will be able to work at his own pace. In course of time he loses this feeling of assurance. In the end practically all of them feel that they are being made to work under pressure. Some try to rationalise their predicament by telling themselves (and their colleagues) that they have to deal with sponsors who are particularly unreasonable.

The project type of research tends to develop not only its own pace but also its own scale of work. For one thing, project directors begin to feel that by expanding their staff they will be able to complete their work quickly—although this is often an illusion. For another, when vast resources are available, research centres are likely to compete with each other for a larger and larger share of the pie. In course of time the sponsors of research are persuaded that the larger the project the more important will be its findings.

What is to be done? Is there no alternative? The first step towards an alternative would seem to lie in the simple realisation that not every type of research needs to be defined as a project. After all, individuals still do research in universities on limited budgets and with no commitment to produce within a set period results of fundamental value to the nation. Social scientists who feel overwhelmed by the projects they have undertaken must surely realise that this business did

not really get going in India till fifteen or twenty years ago.

It is of course true that many changes have taken place in the country during the last fifteen or twenty years. Planning has become a part of our social reality and it has created its own institutions. It would be unwise, not to say foolish, of the social scientist to ignore these changes or to withdraw from participation in them.

Planning for social and economic change requires research, not only for the formulation of proposals but also for the evaluation of their results. Economists have an important and legitimate part to play in these processes and other social scientists have also some contribution to make, particularly in regard to evaluation. Obviously, a great deal of this kind of research will have to be done in the form of projects—sometimes quite large projects—with budgets, time schedules and project reports. Also, those social scientists who devote themselves to such projects will have to work in close association with government or agencies sponsored by government.

But, clearly, not all social scientists need to do this kind of work and in some cases work on such projects is bound to divert them from what by their training and aptitude they are best suited to do. Planning is certainly an important part of our social reality but it is not the whole reality. Even the most ardent advocates of planning will admit that it is neither possible nor desirable for a centralised agency to plan every aspect of social life. Many of these other aspects of life are accessible for investigation and research by the older approach based on individual initiative and without any direct commitment about the results of research to government or any other organization.

One could for instance study changes in kinship organization in India or in the forms and meanings of ritual; or the ways in which perceptions of the social hierarchy are changing. These are all aspects of life in which all members of society and not just professional social scientists may take a legitimate interest. At the same time, the results of such studies are not likely to be of direct or immediate use to those responsible for planning. Such studies can be pursued by individual scholars and there may not be any need to seek to interest government in giving them financial support.

Any subject of research can be formulated as a project having some bearing on the work of government. In this way, larger financial support will no doubt be secured than for work designed mainly for critical understanding. But social scientists will have to decide for themselves how much they value their independence, what price they are prepared to pay to preserve it, and what they owe to themselves, to their profession and to the public.

Status and potential

J P. NAIK

THE tradition of social science research in India is nearly a hundred years old because some of our national leaders like R. C. Dutt or Dadabhai Naoroji wrote books or monographs on some aspects of our national life which are good examples of original, scholarly and objective work in the pursuit of truth. But such efforts remained purely individual and did not become a distinct stream of national life or an outstanding feature of the educational system.

The universities, which alone can develop such programmes, were established in India as purely examining bodies. The concept of a teaching university was accepted, even on paper, only in the Allahabad University Act of 1887; and the idea that universities should do research was accepted only as late as in the Government Resolution 1913. Research in social science in the universities thus began mainly after the first world war. But, its progress in the initial years, and especially till 1947, was rather slow because the number of university departments and of trained personnel available for research was very limited.

Social science research in India has, therefore, mainly developed in the post-independence period. Then, for the first time, conditions fayourable for the promotion of social science research were created in the The number of univercountry. sity departments in social sciences increased considerably and so did the volume of trained personnel. Research also acquired prestige and several research institutes came to be established. The Ph.D. degree was instituted in many centres and its output has now grown to about 600 per year. Organizations like the RPC of the Planning Commission made funds available for research on a fair scale; and publication facilities also increased.

A recent survey of social science research conducted by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) has shown that social science research in the country is mainly a growth of the post-independence period: the quantum of research in the decade 1950-60 is almost double of all that was done in the past; and the research done in the decade 1960-70 is almost double that done in the decade 1950-60. This is something of which we can well feel proud. This is also why I feel that the establishment of the ICSSR in 1969 has been both opportune and significant.

What are the main problems in social science research as I see them on the basis of my experience for

the last years as the Member-Secretary of the ICSSR?

The first and a very obvious point is that research has developed very unequally over the different disciplines. In a discipline like economics, our achievements are tremendous. But in comparison, disciplines like geography or public administration are trailing far behind. Of course, such inequality of development will always remain. All the same, some special efforts to promote the development of some of the less advanced disciplines seem to be called for.

What is true of the uneven development of research over the different disciplines is equally true of its development in different parts of the country. The centres of active research in the social sciences are very unevenly distributed in the States; and so is the number of active researchers. While some inequalities in this regard are inevitable, deliberate and sustained efforts are needed to ensure that, in a vast and varied country like ours, research centres and activities are spread over all parts of the country, making it possible to tackle the immense variety of local problems and conditions we have to face.

Another point is that, even now, our total potential for research is very limited. For research to flower, we need university departments or research institutions of a fairly large size and staffed by competent persons. Such centres are still very The proportion of scholars few. who are engaged in research, continuously or even intermittently, is still a very small proportion of the total scholarly community. What is probably worse, there are several disincentives to research in the present university set-up and, by and large, only a small proportion of our most talented students take to courses in the social sciences.

These handicaps will have to be steadily overcome, if the total pool of talent available to research in social sciences is to be increased and enabled to function in conditions satisfactory to the pursuit of research. In particular, we need a larger and more discriminating pro-

gramme of doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships which should be placed at the disposal of our leading social scientists who show a commitment to guide and train young persons. It is only in this manner that we can keep on increasing the number of intellectuals willing to join the academic community.

Coming to the quality of research, I find that action on a number of fronts is called for. A good deal of our research is imitative in the sense that it merely tries to fill in Indian data in some foreign model that is easily borrowed. Fortunately, such research is decreasing but it is still there and to an uncomfortable extent in some areas. Very often, the research tends to be discrete and does not necessarily add up to any comprehensive picture. The weaknesses in conceptual framework and methodology are also too often in evidence.

The problem once again is the old familiar one: the quantum of social science research has increased very considerably in the post-independence period but the progress on the qualitative side has not been in the same proportion. The task ahead, therefore, is doubly difficult. We must expand the quantum of research still faster and what is even more important, improve its quality to levels where the whole investment will begin to pay rich dividends.

In this significant task, the UGC and the ICSSR have a role to play: they can use their resources advantageously in increasing the pool of talent in the social sciences through appropriate programmes of fellowship and training, in building up viable research centres and institutions in different parts of the country, in creating an adequate infra-structure of clearing-houses and documentation services, data books and publication facilities and, above all, by providing funds for research. But, the most important role in this has to be played by the academic community itself. First and foremost, it has to concern itself continuously and in depth, with the study of national problems of relevance and significance. It is

only through this effort that the quality of research will improve, the knowledge-base for the solution of our problems and key policy decisions will be adequately strengthened and we shall be able to make our own contribution to theory-building and development of the social science disciplines.

After all is said and done, the basic issue remains that the social sciences have a unique contribution to make to the quality of life. The physical sciences have made immense strides in the last three centuries, and made it possible for man to create an abundance of goods and services so that a high standard of living which was the privilege of a small minority in the pre-scientific world has now become possible for every individual. But it has now been realized that this pursuit of a high material standard of living has brought many problems in its wake such as environmental pollution, depletion of resources, and increased social and international tensions.

The remedy obviously lies in the development of social sciences which can supplement the achievements of the physical sciences. They may not essentially help us to produce more, although their role, even in material production, is not inconsiderable. But certainly they can give us a better conception and control of ourselves, teach us to live together more harmoniously, to work and govern ourselves more meaningfully, and to organize the relationship of man with himself, with other human beings, and with nature on a more fruitful basis. It is through this that man will inherit the good and abundant life which has been his eternal dream.

In my view, therefore, it should be a continuous concern of the social scientists to strive to clarify the concept of the quality of life, to devise tools for its measurement, and eventually present an annual report to the nation on what is happening to the quality of life within it. This would be a great enterprise in the education of the people and an effective correction to bureaucratic smugness or popular euphoria.

In search of a role

RAJNI KOTHAR!

IT would be an understatement to say that social sciences in India are in bad shape. They are in terrible shape. Like most Indian enterprises they are expanding rapidly and expanding on the wrong premises. There is nothing very insufficient about them, certainly not the resources at their disposal which are proportionately more than this country can provide. But there is a lot that is inadequate them-their institutional about structures, their performance, the quality of their output, the character and moral fibre of their practitioners.

No one can deny the importance of the social sciences in our time—both in regard to the advancement of knowledge itself and in regard to the relationship between knowledge and purpose in society. We are at a stage in history when the social sciences constitute the new frontier of science. The physical sciences per se have come to a grinding halt in dealing with the most pressing problems of human evolution and are looking to the social sciences—to the new developments in psychology and anthropology, to political economy, to demography—for analysis and illu-

mination. The social sciences also constitute the new frontier of philosophy and normative studies as the traditional students of political and social philosophy feel bewildered and are unable to project a new vision of man and society thanks to the collapse of both the liberal theory of progress and its Marxist offshoot.

But, on both these counts, social scientists have shown little sensitivity, even the better among them still operating under the impact of archaic frames of reference, still continuing to be impressed by the mechanistic advances of a physics and a biology that are now pretty much dead. In fact, some of the more creative thinking in this regard has come from physical scientists turned social scientists or from enlightened men of affairs faced by the crises posed by an ever expanding technology, growing militarisation of the world, the ineptness of both representative democracy and socialist planning to meet the demands of our time and the increasing poverty and degradation of millions of 'marginal men' in large parts of the world for whom society has no use but for whom

demagogues and the theorists of violence have all the use.

The future we face is likely to become more ugly and inequitous and, naturally, the scientists are possessed by a deep sense of crisis (as well as a certain sense of guilt). But, there aren't many among the social scientists themselves who have shown awareness of these ominous trends and responded to them with rigour and a sense of responsibility.

In our own country, these issues have not even been posed by our social scientists although it is clear that they touch us very intimately: perhaps one in every four unemployed persons in the world is to be found in India, a blind adoption of western technology has both made us dependent on other countries and created wide gaps within our own society, the world arms race is affecting us badly by eating into our scarce resource base and creating chauvinist pressures for expansionism and all kinds of fantasies about crashing into the big power club, and our penchant for both democracy and socialism do not seem to take us far in handling the pressures of a politically alive populace.

On all this there seems to be complete innocence in our universities and research establishments. There is little sensitivity, let alone sustained analysis, of the kind of world we are living in and the kind of future that is unfolding before us and the nature of challenges thrown up by these developments to us as citizens and as students of society.

Indeed, to pose the problems facing social sciences in this manner must appear strange and farfetched to the world in which most of our social scientists live. It is a very different and very depressing world. Exchange of examinerships and nominations to selection committees, cooking up first classes and doctorate degrees for one's favourites and denying these certificates of greatness to others, getting on to committees of the UGC and the ICSSR, going to ministers to get professorships and waiting on foreign dignitaries for a trip abroad,

'putting up a fight' for a larger office or better furnishing—or an exclusive peon—as compared to one's colleagues, 'keeping in their place' younger and more competent members of the department (in case they managed to get in in the first instance) and reporting to the Vice Chancellor or the more powerful Registrar on the misdeeds of others—these are the engaging activities of the grey and not so grey eminences of our university departments of the social sciences.

As regards intellectual interactions, confined for the most part to those great peaks of intellectual activity known as seminars, a lot of steam is spent in vying with one another in taking 'radical' positions, brandishing knowledge about the latest books on the basis of some review in the Sunday newspapers, discussing endlessly how important is teaching as compared to research or research as compared to teaching, and asserting with the strongest of convictions that the 'country is going to the dogs' and a revolution is round the corner.

Things are not much different with our so-called autonomous research and training establishments and the more favoured and 'research oriented' universities with large budgets and 'facilities', not only in the form of a large line of peons and stenographers—one for each Professor though of course none for anyone else-but also impressive symbols of status like staff cars, computers and photo duplicating machines. The notion that better facilities produce better work-a long standing alibi for not doing anything for most of our social scientists—has been finally laid to rest by these highly endowed institutions.

These institutions also present another prominent aspect of our urban landscape everywhere—impressive architecture outside housing a lifeless stillness inside. Some of our biggest research and training institutions which were established with great fanfare and large financial allocations—the IIPA, the Indian School of International Studies, the Institute of Advanced Study in Simla and the NICD in

Hyderabad to name a few of them*
—present a picture of academic deadwood and bureaucratic vitality, each thriving on the other and both accounting for a colossal waste of national resources.

A longside complaints about facilities, there has also been a long held view that lack of finances was coming in the way of excellence in our social sciences. That this too is a major misconception will be seen if an objective assessment of the large number of research projects that have been supported by the Research Programmes Commimitee of the Planning Commission, the Ford Foundation and the Indian Council of Social Science Research is made. I suspect that many of these research grants cover up a lot of basic incompetence by providing new claims to eminence and new entry points in personal bio-data (alongside the number of Ph.D. students guided and the length teaching experience) as well as in departmental records to be presented in the next round of claims for expansion.

There is also a lot of academic exploitation in social science research in this country, not infrequently helped by the rules enforced by bodies like the RPC and the ICSSR. Work done by junior members of a department or research institution, including papers and books written by them, is expropriated by the seniors who happen to be 'project directors', there is wholesale lifting of both ideas and research instruments from other peoples' work without even acknowledgement, ambitious an projects are undertaken without technical competence and this leads to all kinds of shortcuts, and there is a hardening of institutional hierarchies and academic rivalries

^{*}Each of these institutions is at this moment undergoing a change. The IIPA is looking for a new Director and new senior staff, the ISIS has joined the Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Simla institute has now an eminent social scientist as its new director and the NICD too will have a new regime. It is to be hoped that something might happen as a result of these changes though one cannot be sure given past experience and the continuing pressures from outside.

as a result of the money that research projects bring in.

The dispensing authorities themselves are drowned under paper work, get bogged down by rules and precedents which become a substitute for hard judgements and, given their own ignorance of the subject matter, begin to give in to pressures based on external pulls, the political standing of members, and considerations of bargaining and compromise. In just a short time an elaborate patronage network develops and a few key people who long ago gave up serious academic work decide upon proposals for which they have not the slightest competence. These gentlemen move from one committee to another and hurriedly dispose of funds on proposals that have not been carefully scrutinized by the funding agency. The 'experts' to whom the proposals are referred have in a large number of cases lost all touch with the discipline and are in fact often picked with a definite result in mind.

In a very short while there develops a power nexus within these bodies (with key links outside) which transforms them into little jagirs held by absentee landlords disposing off tenancy rights among their favourites or otherwise docile creatures, and evicting those who have the temerity not to conform to the whims and interests of the rentiers.

Within the large research and training institutions which do not have to depend on outside grants, there are similar tendencies at work. Almost from the beginning there develops a big hierarchy, a departmental structure on a pattern that combines the ills of university departments and government departments, and the key to their culture is to be found in the weighty manuals laying out bye-laws and rules of the organisation.

In all but a very few cases the model for drawing up these manuals is taken from the governmental bureaucracy which, it is said, provides us with the only body of systematic experience that we have—and what do academics know about rules anyway? This applies

as much to the so-called 'autonomous' institutions as to those set up under government auspices; government itself often sets up autonomous institutions under the auspices of various ministries, often in good faith, and with a view to providing greater flexibility. However, those in charge of these institutions (normally men with a long background of experience in administration) are even more zealous of preserving forms and rigid adherence to them than are people working in government departments.

Upon this is added the peculiar bureaucratic culture of these institutions, provided by large distances between the administrative head and the research staff, by the manner in which appointments are made (creation of posts and fixing their scales and hierarchies being always more important than discovering the people that are going to fill the posts), by the perennial committee system to which all hard decisions are passed often only to be shelved, and by the stifling nuances of the informal power structure that operates in these institutions with its accent on groupism and academic espionage. Not infrequently, as in government departments, all work comes to a halt when some change in the top positions is under way and when the change does take place the effective status of individuals may suddenly change and research priorities fixed earlier thrown overboard.

The victim of all this, of course, is the individual researcher or teacher and his work. He has often. on pain of being shown the door, to do things quite different from his own interest or training. No wonder there is so much of a floating academic population applying always for new jobs. No wonder also that so many of our young and able men with settled jobs in the universities and research institutions want to leave and go abroad, or join government research wings or management institutes where there is at least a better treatment of people even if the academic content of the work may be trivial. Some of them apply for fellowships with the ICSSR or the Simla Institute simply to 'get away from it all', not necessarily because their work is at a stage when they need a year or two off to concentrate on writing or research.

Perhaps the heart of the problem is that the only relevant culture for the Indian intellectual community (of which the social scientists constitute a large proportion) is the bureaucratic culture. All the traits of bureaucracy dominate the functioning of our universities and research institutions—a continuous expansion in size, precise status hierarchies, rigid structures with their accent on rules and their razor fine application, much greater stress on the autonomy of institutional structures than on the autonomy of individuals (rules, we are told, are framed with the wrongdoer and the fraudulent in mind who then dictates how the honest and the competent will be treated), and a system of rewards that is based on status attainments and proximity to those in power than on competence and independence of mind which usually turn out to be a liability.

The overriding principle in all this is, of course, hierarchy for which we have a deep cultural affinity. But in this age of democracy and socialism, in the way these terms are understood in this country, the formal concepts of hierarchy and seniority (which did have a meaning at one time) are confounded by constant redefinition under the pressures mounted on the one hand by political big wigs and their supposed friends and agents, and on the other hand by reference to spreading benefits widely and thinly so as satisfy all to constituencies.

In this spreading game (accelerated by government sponsored funding agencies) the less competent you are the better your chances and the more quickly you will move up to your successively higher state of incompetence. As this happens, the norms governing the study of social sciences get smoothly replaced by the norms governing the politics of social sciences in which deviousness and duplicity often get the better of honest and sustained work, sychophancy and jumping on the band-

wagon the better of intellectual independence, and facility in the art of plagiarism or in constantly quoting Gandhi or Ghalib the better of original research. There is no dearth of such upstarts in our midst (as in politics so in academics), enlarging constantly on the themes of democracy and socialism, and successfully cornering all resources for themselves and their loyal followers.

It is necessary here to say that my use of the terms 'bureaucracy' and 'politics' above refer less to the doings of professional bureaucrats and politicians and more to the academic bureaucrats and academic politicians, proper—the occupants of administrative positions in the universities and research institutes, the eminent professors serving on various committees both within the academic institutions and outside them in fund dispersing agencies and various government bodies, and most of all the long line of 'educationists' who are occupying key administrative positions at still higher levels.

Academic administrators are more rigid and rule-bound than the usual administrators, academic politicians more devious and dishonest than the usual politicians. To make matters worse, these gentlemen also continue to think of themselves as intellectuals—long after giving up serious academic work—and hence also qualified to pronounce judgement on academic matters which the other type of administrators will hesitate to do.

Who gets on to these positions? Normally, those who are, intellectually speaking, spent forces. If the competent by some chance get into some of these positions—even then due to somebody's condescending favour-they are soon subjected to pressures which either force them to 'fall in line' or to leave in disgust. The truly competent people have not shown either the aptitude or the nerve to occupy these positions, shake them from their state of stupor and malignancy, and fight for the values they stand for. Competent administrators from other sectors of society have also gradually become averse to accepting

positions in universities and other academic institutions. Hence the fact that academic institutions have become a hunting ground for the rentier class from among the academics themselves.

Even the relatively competent people among the academicians have gradually learnt to put up with this state of affairs and have become increasingly passive spectators of the environment. competent among the scholars are, therefore, as responsible for the current malaise in the social sciences as the incompetent, in a way more responsible as one expects a greater sense of responsibility from them. Some of them manage to save their souls by leading a double scholarly life, a 'public' life spent in the university or the research institute according to the dictates of the latter and in exchange for a wage packet, and a 'private' life in which they pursue their real intellectual interests. It is the latter that accounts for much of the creative output of our social scientists.

M any of the points made above depict the general situation in our higher education and are not limited to social sciences as such. What is peculiar to the social sciences and thus worsens the situation is the fact that by the nature of their subject matter, social scientists acquire a proximity to centres of power, feel that they are more 'relevant' to contemporary society, and are prone to be influenced by the perennial exhortation that their work should be 'useful' to the government.

It is also the case that because the work of economists or sociologists or political scientists have a bearing on issues of policy or power, there develops an unhealthy cleavage between those whose conclusions are palatable to politicians and bureaucrats and those who insist on retaining their independent point of view. Very soon and often imperceptibly, the former position moves from being based on honest analysis to one of forced conformism (with expected rewards from the establishment) while the latter takes a turn from constructive criti-

cism to laboured oppositionalism (with a tendency to provide fodder to opposition parties).

As this happens, the autonomy of the social sciences gets severely compromised and professional ethics get muddy, exposed to highly personalised political demands, and not infrequently open to blackmail and institutionalised corrup-Dragging honest scholars' tion. name into cooked up controversy, giving them a bad name (at one time the practise was to call them communists, now they are branded as CIA agents), engineering calculated questions in Parliament and inspired stories in Blitz or Organizer, and deliberate scandal-mongering floated from hot-houses of gossip located in elite academic institutions are common symptoms of such an atmosphere.

The disease itself is deeper and is to be found in a field which does not really know what its role is, seeks shortcuts to success (e.g. the number of times you are summoned by the A.I.R.), is not subject to rigorous professional demands (an examination of appointments to top positions will show this), and measures competence by status instead of bestowing status on those who are competent.

Even where professional standards have become somewhat more rigorous, as in economics or psychology, the same trends operate but in a more subtle manner; in fact the accent on conformity (and studied indifference towards nonconformists) is quite pronounced in these fields and both institutional politics and individual ostracism often take on a pernicious character. (In fact in these fields rigour itself, as it is confused with acquisition of some techniques and as it leaves out large areas of competence, has become a handle for perpetuating narrow professionalism and the groupism that goes along with it.)

Basic to this whole malaise is the institutional milieu in which our social sciences have flourished. Institutional structures by themselves have no legitimacy no matter how weighty their manuals

may be. They acquire legitimacy by facilitating and supporting, indeed nurturing, the creative potentialities and talents of individuals and on that basis forging durable communities based on mutual trust and regard. As they succeed in doing this, institutions acquire their own powerful identities and endure through time.

This is not the case with us so far as our academic institutions are concerned. What we have instead is an institutional milieu which smothers individuality by subjecting it to departmental rigidity and the slow poison of conformism, mistake creative idiosyncracies for arrogance and suppresses them (how many times has one heard the charge of arrogance on precisely those social scientists who care for their work and their integrity?), and so structures incentives and rewards that a truly collegiate relationship based on self-respect and mutual trust while still permissive of wideranging differences in opinions and temperaments is not allowed to be institutionalised. It is here and not in the supposed lack of facilities or finances that the roots of stagnation in our social sciences are to be found.

Ais with all our ills, when we become uncomfortable we look for a neat diagnosis and a panacea. The diagnosis that emerged (in the midsixties) was that there were not enough funds for social science research in the country and that there was no 'central or national organisation which could... act as a spokesman for social science research and elicit support and recognition by government'.

The panacea that came up was to follow the western example and set up a research council which would 'promote and coordinate' research in the social sciences. The result is the Indian Council of Social Science Research which was set up in May 1969 and of which the first term of three years has just ended and a new Council has now been appointed. The government, which nominates all the members of the Council, has allocated substantial sums to it and has generally left the Council, which is a registered 'nutonomous' body, free to develop

its own internal structure as well as its relationship with institutions and individuals outside.

It is too early to pass a judgement on the impact of the Council on social science research in the country. That there will be some impact is obvious, given the size of the undertaking and the ambitious manner in which the Council, operating through the highly determined and self-confident administrative style of its Member-Secretary, J. P. Naik, has branched off into several directions. At the same time it seems fairly clear by now (and I speak here with some experience of the working of the Council) that a high level research council is not the answer to the problems that beset the social sciences in the country.

In western countries from where the concept of a social science research council has come, the social science community has arrived at a different stage of its own autonomy, sense of self-regard and confidence in the role of social science in their respective societies. I have some serious misgivings about the way social science disciplines have developed in some of these countries, especially in the United States, misgivings that are both academic and political. Some westerners themselves share these concerns.

At the same time one cannot deny that the social science community in these countries has acquired a high degree of institutional autonomy, a process of internal dissent and change through the medium of highly organised professional associations and journals at both national and regional levels, the growth of professional standards that are widely accepted and by and large adhered to, all of which makes despite all kinds of academic politics and the corrupting influences of the close relationship between government and universitiesindividual output and quality of work the principal criterion of professional evaluation and recognition.

The existence of a social science research council in such a context is quite a different propo-

sition from setting one up in an environment that is totally different and in which the development of professional autonomy and regard for individual worth on the basis of work and competence (rather than rank and influence) have yet to be institutionalised through the development of an appropriate corporate structure for scholarly work. In the former, such a council becomes one among many sources of intellectual support and stimulation, it is looked upon as providing just that and nothing more, and itself benefits from the strength that lies outside.

In the latter, a body like the ICSSR takes on an exaggerated role, everyone looks to it for all kinds of help and relief (how many times have gatherings of social scientists, government funding agencies and all kinds of other bodies resolved their own problems by deciding to refer them to the ICSSR?), and with such a concentrated attention from all sides it is to be expected that a body like that may become an important arena of academic politicking and hence a source of accentuating rather than correcting existing trends. In some cases such a body may even facilitate academic factionalism within disciplines and the rise of new entrepreneurs who would not otherwise have got a chance and if they had a chance certainly not such leverage.

Looked at in this manner, and given the advantage of hindsight, one is led to the view that the comprehensive terms of reference under which the Indian Council of Social Science Research was set up in 1969 may have been a premature step. Lacking the self-generating institutional mechanisms in most of the disciplines and lacking clear criteria for identifying individual talent and institutions of excellence, a body like that with such wide terms of reference had necessarily to start from scratch and to depend upon administrative drive from above rather than scholarly demands from the scientific community.

I do not for a moment want to suggest that there was no need for

allocating substantial indigenous resources for research in the social sciences in India; there was a crying need for this and the ICSSR has certainly met this need, one of its major contributions being to liberate the Indian social scientist from dependence on foreign foundations for research funds. Something that the University Grants Commission should have done long ago by a broader definition of both its functions and its institutional coverage is now being done by the ICSSR. What was wrong was the basic diagnosis that making such funds available by establishing one more high level authority was going to raise the standards of social sciences in India.

The notion that raising of social science standards was like spreading adult education has been the fundamental flaw in this thinking; even in academically more advanced societies the centres of creativity are few and far between. In our context, of course, such an approach leads to the one inevitable and inexorable law of all academic expansion—a deadening hold of rules and an incipient bureaucracy in close alliance with a class of honorary, though not always so honorable, academic politicians.

Also, in our context, such an approach leads to a proliferating canvas on which energy and resources are thinly spread with Where lasting impact. competence is not the main criterion, slogans take over. The most attractive of these slogans in the social sciences is to go democraticor perhaps socialistic—by helping all and sundry, opening regional branches, establishing scholarships, starting a country-wide series of methodology courses and laying down 'priorities' on the basis of which special programmes can be 'sponsored'.

Slowly, the notion of spreading benefits—which few can contest for fear of being branded 'elitist'—becomes a grand alibi for giving succour to the friends and followers of the powers that be

and holding back resources from the centres of real excellence who, however, refuse to get drawn into the establishment and prefer to maintain their independence.

Let the ICSSR be. It has come to stay and for good reasons. And researchers, after all, do need support, the bulk of which, under the present circumstances, will have to come from the ICSSR. Also, the fact remains that the ICSSR is much less hamstrung by a large internal bureaucracy than are bodies like the UGC. It may also internal be able to provide professional help in filling some important gaps in the social sciences, especially in regard to providing technical assistance and overheads to institutions of proven merit. (So far these functions have received only marginal attention.)

These are important service functions which are in some ways crucial. But the provision of facilities by itself will not generate excellence where it is not already there and it seems that the more basic needs of the social sciences lie in directions other than the provision of financial support for research projects or the promotion of methodology courses and documentation and data centres.

The basic need is to create institutional structures that are conducive to individual excellence, a general spirit of critical inquiry and free exchange of ideas, good team work arising out of a recognition of complementarities in divergent approaches and competing skills (rather than being threatened by such differences as is the case now), and an atmosphere in which there is minimum of hierarchy and maximum flexibility and openness. I do not agree with the view that competence and talent are lacking in this country; what is lacking is consolidation of existing talent and the mutual fortification of men of excellence by bringing them together in appropriate institutional structures where both their individual and their collective work can have a cumulative impact.

The universities, riddled as they are with pressures of mass edu-

cation and the political pressures emanating from their immediate environment, and organised as they are on the model of large bureaucratic establishments, have by and large failed to provide such structures. The proposal to establish a new kind of university which could combine teaching and research through a new kind of corporate structure and by emphasizing interdisciplinary centres was mooted in the concept of the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The way that university has gone about organising itself and defining its role, however, and judging from the kind of corpus that it has already collected, it is unlikely that it will do any better than its predecessors, despite its access to massive resources and the support that it has from fairly high quarters. If anything the latter factors may detract from the academic aims of the University.

Meanwhile, the University of Delhi which was perhaps the best university we had and which had during the last several years shown a capacity for considerable fresh initiative and drive, e.g., in bringing together an outstanding group in the Delhi School of Economics, is also beginning to give in to external pressures and internal politics.

Nor are things any better outside the universities where all kinds of white elephants are standing immobile and in silent testimony to our great propensity at establishing huge structures and providing them with impressive buildings and large contingents of Class III and Class IV employees so that they could not ever be dislodged from position.*

Let seems fairly clear by now that the only way social science talent can be built in a systematic manner is by a large number of small institutions, built around a nucleus

^{*}There are just a few exceptions to this analysis, by now reduced to one or two older universities (like Bombay) which have been fortunately bestowed by a tradition of administrative inertia, and one or two non-university bodies like the Gokhale Institute in Poona which too was recently rocked by a few of the factors discussed above.

or young scholars, without departmental structures, inter-disciplinary in nature, and provided with a flexible resource base and an open structure of recruitment and governance. What we need is not a few but dozens of such institutions spread around the country, with different foci of interest, and built around scholars of proven merit and high potential.

A start has been made in this direction by the establishment of institutions like the Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research in Ahmedabad, the Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum and the Institute for Social and Economic Change in Bangalore. There is need to develop many more such institutions, keep them relatively small and collegiate in character, build safeguards against undue encroachment of local politics, and develop a conscious policy in this regard. Till now most of these have been stray efforts launched by individuals who felt frustrated with the university system.

The point is that we have never given adequate thought to appropriate institution-building for excellence in the social sciences which is perhaps more critical than all that is going on in the name of 'raising the standards' through some benevolent acts from above. In this respect it is a matter of regret that perhaps the most important recommendation of the V.K.R.V. Rao Committee Report, on the basis of which the ICSSR was set up, namely that the Council should provide maintenance support to nonuniversity research institutions in the social sciences, was turned down by the government. It appears that the government, manned though it is by a large battery of educationists, has no conception of what constitutes the cutting edge of progress in the field of knowledge.

But then one should not expect much from the government. Not especially when the record of the social scientists themselves is not much better. Thus, it is interesting that bodies like the University Grants Commission and the Indian Council of Social Science Research in whose deliberations on social sciences the social scientists constitute a majority, and to which everyone looks for the development of the social sciences (to one in respect of basic policies and to the other in respect of research support) have given very little thought to the issue of optimum institution-building.† Instead, attention is being devoted to fixing priorities for social science research and starting various special programmes on that basis.

This whole preoccupation with fixing 'priorities'—I suppose it is part of the general bogey of 'relevance' which is much in fashion these days—is ridden with serious problems and the possibility of not a little mischief. It suggests that one is dealing with a community which has no firm identity of its own and no clear perception of its role in society. A science which looks to a funding agency to set up priorities for itself is a science which does not know its own mind.

The social scientists of India must decide what they want, what they value most. Is it recognition from government, funds and 'facilities', and guidance from above about the 'priorities' they ought to follow? Or would they rather concentrate on cultivating their own excellence, pursuing areas of work which motivate them most as sensitive members of their society. respecting talent in others instead of being threatened by it, and developing a fellowship of knowledge and sensitivity which alone is relevant for a truly autonomous and responsible community of scholars? Once this choice is made, the proper institutional strategy for the development of social sciences will follow. So long as it is not made, our social sciences will continue to be dominated by not only foreign influences but also by academic bureaucrats and politicians in our own midst.

[†]The Education Commission made certain recommendations in this respect but little has been done to implement them. Indeed as things stand, even 'advanced centres' are slowly becoming a farce. So is the programme of spreading 'area studies'.

The question of relevance

P C. JOSHI

'It has generally held true that the accredited learned class and the seminaries of the higher learning have looked askance at all immovation,' Thoistein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class

'What social science needs in less use of elaborate techniques and more courage to tackle, rather than dodge, the central issues, But to demand that is to ignore the social reasons that have made social science what it is'. J. D. Bernal, Science in History.

THE poser on the problem of social science raises a number of important issues including the question of relevance. There is need for discussion and controversy on this issue from different points of view. In my opinino, the lack of relevance of social sciences constitutes one of the key problems in many underdeveloped countries including The poser, however, does India. not provide any insight either into the factors contributing to it or into its implications both for social sciences and for society in these In this article, an countries. attempt has been made to present some tentative thoughts and reflections on this crucial issue.

To raise the question of lack of relevance is to suggest that the social sciences as they exist are not adequately helpful either in the understanding of the social realities of underdeveloped countries or in finding a solution to their basic problems. Furthermore, the questions which are bothering most social scientists in these countries are not the same questions as are being thrown up into prominence by socio-political processes. There is thus a wide chasm between the dominant concerns of social scientists and the urgent social demands in these countries. An understanding of the causes of this chasm is one of the most important subjects to which social scientists have not yet earnestly addressed themselves. A serious enquiry into this field should be the legitimate concern of philosophy or the sociology of social science--a field which is a neglected one in most underdeveloped countries.

The question of the relevance of the social sciences is only an aspect of the wider question of the relevance of the entire western intellectual heritage to the underdeveloped countries. The non-western countries exploring the paths and perspectives for a new future are faced with the problem of re-evaluating this heritage from the point of view of their own needs and aspirations. Not the mere borrowing and transfer of knowledge from the western to the non-western world, but a critical and creative approach to all knowledge alone can help in tackling the problem of relevance. It alone can help in bridging the gap between the uncritically implanted or imported structure of social sciences and the basic demands of developing societies. raise the question of lack of relevance is thus to call not for partial modification but for innovations in the methodology and approaches of social sciences.

The leading social scientists of the underdeveloped countries are, however, not yet fully alive to the necessity of such innovation. breakthrough in the social sciences is therefore not likely to come about on the initiative of professional social scientists. It seems that, in the underdeveloped countries, the stimulus for an intellectual breakthrough is likely to be provided more by social and political ferment than by any inner dynamism of the social sciences. Thus, in these countries the unreality and non-relevance of some of the basic orientations and approaches of the social sciences are brought sharply to the fore by the social realities and compulsions as reflected in and through the political sphere.

It should be noted that these basic orientations and approaches which require to be discarded have become part and parcel of the social sciences in the wake of their professionalisation. Among these it is times. In their case the motivation possible to identify the following for scientific activity was provided three conceptions as the most one by the proverbial search for crucial:

- (1) The conception of the 'scientific man';
- (2) The equation of scientific competence with mere technical sophistication, leading to over-emphasis on fragmentation of social knowledge and under-emphasis on integration;
- (3) The assumption of a universal social science, which leads to uncritical implantation of western concepts and categories and which in turn discourages critique and innovation.

The problem of relevance cannot be tackled without questioning the validity of these conceptions and without promoting new conceptions in their place. It should also be noted that in underdeveloped countries the potentialities of a new political ferment cannot be fully exploited for social reconstruction without creating alternative intellectual frameworks which are more relevant to their social situation.

A critique of these conceptions is a necessary step in that direction. The following pages offer our observations on the thought-inhibiting role of these conceptions.

In the first place, professionalisation has created and sustained the conception of a 'scientific man' possessing skills and tools and standing, as it were, outside and above social problems and conflicts. Professionalisation has in this way given a distorted, if not a very false, idea of the requirements and attributes of a social scientist. The image of the social scientist which has become current following professionalisation of social sciences is in sharp conflict with the facts regarding the founders of the social sciences in the western world.

The history of the social sciences tells us that their pioneers were not ivory-tower scholars detached from the currents and obligations of social life. On the contrary, they were actively and deeply involved

in the problems posed by their times. In their case the motivation for scientific activity was provided not by the proverbial search for truth; they were in fact, striving, with the aid of the scientific method, for a meaningful understanding of social problems and for enlarging the scope for human intervention in social affairs.

The underdeveloped countries have, however, inherited not the Renaissance conception of the social scientist as a social critic who was as much a participant in as an analyst of human affairs; they have inherited the contemporary conception of social scientist as a valueneutral technician or a specialist. In this way, the very definition of a social scientist today puts a high premium on certain attributes which do not meet the basic needs of the underdeveloped countries. By sanctifying value-neutrality, nonactivism and social rootlessness as the desirable attributes of a social scientist, professionalisation promotes the alienation of social scientists from their own societies.

In his recent book, Myrdal draws pointed attention to the rich background of the economists in the past in sharp contrast to the 'pretended sophistication' but actual poverty of intellectual culture and social experience characterising the economists of today:

'This lacunae in their understanding of social problems has in recent decades been fortified by the way in which economists are being trained. Up till around the First World War, practically nobody began his scholarly career as an economist. He, either in former times, was a man of practical affairs who at a mature age turned to economics or he had a previous training as a mathematician, a moral philosopher, lawyer, historian, etc.

'Economists never started out as economists which has now for half a century been the common pattern. The result is that a student has been able to become a professor of economics while having the most elementary knowledge about the society he is studying' (Emphasis added;

Gunnar Myrdal, The Challenge of World Poverty, Pelican Books, 1970).

The contrasting backgrounds of the earlier and later generations of economists to which Myrdal draws attention for the West is so very true for the older and the younger generations of economists in India itself. The younger generation is certainly more equipped with tools and techniques than the best economists of the older generation. But their overall understanding of their society and its problems is often extremely poor and some-times even imperfect. In fact, one often gets the impression that an average social worker or politician in underdeveloped countries has a better feel of his society than the most well-trained and sharp-witted social scientist.

The above logically leads us to another aspect of professionalisation, viz., the virtual equation of scientific competence with technical sophistication. Indeed, this equation has reached a critical point in the contemporary situation. Thus. in many branches of social science like economics, technical sophistication, instead of being employed as an aid to the understanding of social reality, has become almost an end in itself. The cry of the growing lack of relevance of social science for society has been raised in this specific context even in the western countries. There is, however, the growing estrangement of the scientific community from the demands of the wider society. As a result, within the scientific community technical sophistication per se carries far greater prestige than even genuine contributions to the understanding of social reality which do not bear the stamp of sophistication.

Wassily Leontief, one of the major contributors to social science techniques in the contemporary world, has taken note of this serious malady in economics in his recent Presidential Address to the American Economic Association in December 1970. To quote two relevant extracts from this Address:

'In no other field of empirical enquiry has so massive and so-

phisticated a statistical machinery been used with such indifferent Nevertheless, theorists results continue to turn out model after model and mathematical statisticians to devise complicated procedures one after another. Most of these are relegated to the stockpile without any practical application or only after a perfunctory demonstration exercise. Even those used for a while soon fall out of favour, not because the methods that supersede them perform better, but because they are new and different'.

Further,

'Continued preoccupation with imaginary, hypothetical rather than with observable reality has gradually led to a distortion of the informal valuation scale used in our academic community to assess and to rank the scientific performance of its members. Empirical analysis, according to this scale, gets a lower rating than formal mathematical reasoning. Devising a new statistical procedure, however tenuous, that makes it possible to squeeze out one more unknown parameter from a given set of data is judged a greater scientific achievement than the successful search for additional information that would permit us to measure the magnitude of the same parameter in a less ingenious but more reliable way. This despite the fact that in all too many instances sophisticated statistical analysis is performed on a set of data whose exact meaning and validity are unknown to the author or, rather, so well-known that at the very end he warns the reader not to take the material conclusions of the "entire" exercise seriously.' (Wassily Leontief, 'Theoretical Assumptions and Non-Observed Facts', The American Economic Review, Vol. LXI, Number I, March, 1971)

There are other important and serious implications of this pursuit of technical sophistication for its own sake. By giving overriding importance to so-called rigour and measurement, it creates a situation when methods or procedures are not selected or rejected in relation

to their adequacy or inadequacy for the questions which are to be tackled. On the contrary, questions are selected or rejected keeping in view the demands of technical sophistication. In no other field is this more valid than in economics. To quote Galbraith: "Scientific truth in economics is not always what exists: often it is what can be handled by seemingly scientific methods" (J. K. Galbraith, The New Industrial State, p. 146).

In other words, if technical virtuosity is pursued for its own sake, large numbers of social scientists remain preoccupied with less important or non-important questions which offer scope for the use of refined technical methods. As a result, a series of more important questions may not attract social scientists just because they do not offer this scope. It is not an accident that in India questions relating to the class structure or the power situation have been taken up by very few social scientists; and, consequently, these vital subjects continue to be neglected fields of Indian studies.1

The craze for technical sophistication is not, therefore, such a harmless thing as it may super-ficially appear to be. It distorts the very process of the growth of social sciences. In place of a balanced development of different branches, it promotes lopsided Within economics, for growth. political economy instance, or institutional economics valued in favour of are deabstract model-building or econometrics.

Within sociology, micro-level social anthropology is valued far more than macro-sociology. And, within social sciences as a whole, economics is overrated, leading to underdevelopment or neglect of vital disciplines like sociology, political science, social psychology, economic and social history.

This unbalanced growth in social sciences is brought about, among other things, by the over-flow of talent in spheres which are overvalued by the professional community, leaving neglected spheres to misfits or to inferior minds. It is also brought about by greater allocation of material resources to over-valued spheres. In India, instance, the preferential treatment of economics in allocation of talent and resources is too glaring to be ignored. And yet within economics itself there perhaps exists no chair or department of Political Economy or Institutional Economics in any university in India.

For underdeveloped countries like India having scarcity of skills and material resources, the consequences of this type of growth of social sciences are not entirely beneficial. The crucial point to note is that the development of social sciences proceeds not in tune with the genuine needs of these countries but in response to the demands of professionalisation. And the priorities imposed by the demands of professionalisation are often in conflict with the priorities which should be followed for attaining a better understanding of the problems of these countries.

Yet another result of the blind pursuit of technical sophistication is noteworthy. There has come about rigid compartmentalisation. between different disciplines without much scope for cross-fertilisation. There is no doubt that specialisation is necessary for the methodical pursuit of knowledge about society. But specialisation which implies that an aspect of society could be understood without some understanding of other aspects of society or of society as a whole is bound to provide a very partial if not defective view of the aspect which

In this context, the following observations by Myrdal are highly relevant to underdeveloped countries:

[&]quot;The need in underdeveloped countries is not primarily for a large number of high-flown statistical theoreticians, which might seem beyond what can be rapidly provided. What is needed is well-trained persons who have substantive knowledge about conditions in underdeveloped countries and the critical ability to formulate questions about the material that are adequate to social reality in these countries. They should know how to direct their observations effectively and in addition have an elementary knowledge of sampling techniques and a few other simple statistical methods. (The Challenge of World Poverty, Part IV, Chapter 15).

is under study. In other words, specialisation which does not make it obligatory for social scientists to keep in continuous touch with developments in other disciplines and to pursue investigation of a limited area within the framework of a realistic and authentic macroview of society is, to say the least, a very faulty type of specialisation.²

To think that one branch of social sciences can grow and develop without appreciable growth in other branches is to betray a very wrong conception of the growth of knowledge about human affairs. For, there is a basic unity and interdependence about different aspects of human society. And there is, therefore, a basic unity and interdependence also of knowledge about different aspects of human society.

The poser has rightly noted the failure of economics to provide an effective approach to the problem of economic development. The writer of the poser, however, does not relate this failure to the fact of narrow specialisation in economics, to the unwillingness of the economists to abandon the artificial

distinction between the 'economic' and the 'non-economic' and to their lack of understanding of the way the 'non-economic' factors impinge on the 'economic sphere'. Of late, some of the most distinguished economists have come round to the point of view that no meaningful understanding of problems of development is possible without a fundamental reorientation of approach in economics and without continuously drawing upon other disciplines.

To quote Simon Kuznets:

'For the study of the economic growth of nations it is imperative that we become familiar with findings in those related social disciplines that can help us understand population growth patterns, the nature and forces in technological change, the factors that determine the characteristic and trends in political institutions, and generally patterns of behaviour of human beingspartly as a biological species, partly as social animals. Effective work in this field necessarily calls for a shift from market economics to political and social economy'. (Emphasis added; Kuznets, Economic Simon Growth and Structure, Selected Essays, Oxford and IBH Publishing Company, 1965, p. 287).

A growing appreciation of the problems of economic development as a multi-disciplinary intellectual challenge is, however, only one part of the story. A reorientation of social science teaching and a reorganization of research in universities and research institutions on the basis of this principle involve a drastic break from the past. Experimentation on new lines, therefore, comes into sharp conflict with formidable intellectual inertia as well as vested interests.

It can be said that for reorientation and breakthrough in the social sciences, a critique at the level of a philosophy of social science has to be combined with an attempt to ask the relevant questions and then to begin tackling them in a way. The irrelevance and the negative effects of narrow specialisation can be seen more sharply in relation to the study of specific problems rather than at the level of mere philosophical discussion. In fact, an enrichment of the philosophy of social science is more likely to follow rather than precede the accumulation of experience through selecting and tackling more relevant problems for research. Myrdal has rightly suggested that 'the reform of our science will come more surely, though with time lag, in this pragmatic and heuristic way than as a result of improving one's basic philosophy of science' (The Challenge of World Poverty, Part IV, Chapter, 13).

Whatever be the prospect, one must squarely face the present situation which reveals a great lag between the demands made by underdeveloped countries on the social sciences and the capacity of the social sciences to fulfil these demands. Thus, on the one hand, the needs and compulsions of national development have provided new opportunities for the growth of the social sciences; on the other hand, the in-built biases and orientations of the social sciences stand in the way of utilising these new opportunities.

As indicated earlier, in underdeveloped countries like India, the shock to intellectual inertia and the stimulus for reorientation has most often come not from within the circle of social scientists but from the sphere of politics. fact, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to suggest that here the most outstanding and original contributions to economic, social and political thought have been made not by pure social scientists; they have been made by those who have been in the forefront of the struggle for national independence and social emancipation or by social scientists having deep sympathy for social causes.

Thus, in a recent survey of major intellectual contributions in the twentieth century by Karl Deutch, not a single professional social scientist finds a place from Asian countries. Gandhi and Mao Tse-tung have been rightly assigned a prominent place as innova-

The following comment by Galbraith on specialisation is very relevant and worth reproducing:

^{&#}x27;But we must remind ourselves that specialisation is a scientific convenience, not a scientific virtue. It allows, among other things, the use of a wider spectrum of talent .. Specialisation also permits an indispensable division of scientific labour and allows for the development of subcultures of scholarship in which participants are known to each other, communicate readily, and from cooperation, competition, criticism and scholarly recrimmation deepen their knowledge of their own subject matter. But, at least in the social sciences, specialisation is also a source of error. The world to its discredit does not divide neatly along the lines that separate the specialists. These lines were drawn in the first instance by deans, department chairmen or academic committees. They were meant to provide guidance in appointing professors, establishing courses and supporting research. Excellent though the architects were, they cannot be credited with a uniquely valid view of the segments into which society naturally divides itself. And if they could there would still be danger that the specialist in concentrating on his speciality would deny himself knowledge that could only be had from outside (The New Industrial State, pp. 402—3).

politics than within the sphere of social sciences. Questions specially pertaining to the non-relevance of western developmental perspectives or paths to the non-western world have been raised more sharply in the political rather than in the professional academic circles.3

Why is it that the social sciences have not become adequately responsive to the demands of the underdeveloped countries? is it that they have not contributed much to the understanding of the problem confronting these countries or towards their solution?

These are important questions which should be faced by social scientists in underdeveloped countries and which should lead to a process of serious self-questioning by them. It must be recognised that this self-questioning has not yet even begun in a serious way in many countries. A minority of intellectuals in these countries no doubt are beginning to ask questions which cannot be resolved by minor modifications in the social sciences here and there; they call for total rejection of established approaches and orientations in favour of new ones more relevant to the situation obtaining in the underdeveloped world.

At the same time, it cannot be overlooked that the majority of social scientists in these countries continue to be prisoners of the old approaches and orientations. They

tors in the field of social thought do not yet clearly perceive that and as contributors of original social sciences as they exist today It should also be are far from being universal in their stressed that the most vital ques- scope and application; that the tions concerning the development new approaches, frameworks and and dynamics of underdeveloped methods which are relevant to the societies have been raised and conditions and needs of underdebated more within the sphere of developed countries have yet to be created. More importantly, they have yet to grasp the basic fact that the continuing prevalence and use of old approaches and theories in tackling problems of underdeveloped countries have rather dangerous implications. Social sciences thereby are not only prevented from contributing economic, political and cultural of underdeveloped They are, in fact, regeneration countries. converted into a means of preserving the status quo. Moreover, turned into instruthey are ments of intellectual and moral enslavement of the intelligentsia of backward nations by foreign and native vested interests. They are often turned into instruments of neo-colonialism.

> Myrdal in his earlier work on Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions had highlighted the fact that:

"... a large part of the literature (on development problems underdeveloped countries) does not take its starting point from the interests of the underdeveloped countries themselves, but consciously or unconsciously, views their problems from the national political interests of one of the advanced countries or a group of them. This situation has become much worse under the impact of the Cold War when often those national interests steering the analysis have been narrowed down to mere strategic interests in that world con-

Verdal had, therefore, called upon the young social scientists in the underdeveloped countries 'to throw away large structures of meaningless, irrelevant and sometimes blatantly inadequate doctrines and theoretical approaches and to start their thinking afresh from a study of their own needs and problems'. He also visualized that this process would then 'take them far beyond the realm of both outmoded Western liberal economics and Marxism'4 (Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions. Chapter 8).

The process of rejection, adaptation and innovation in social sciences is, however, blocked by formidable obstacles in most underdeveloped countries. To some of these obstacles Myrdal himself has drawn attention in his recent writings. But the more fundamental obstacles have generally been overlooked.

One of the ways in which old approaches are perpetuated is the lack of encouragement to nonconformism and to a critical attitude to dominant theories and approaches in the light of conditions and needs of underdeveloped countries. There is also the factor of the high prestige attached in most of these countries to mere familiarity with, and ability to work in accordance with, procedures and techniques that are prevalent in western centres of learning without regard to their relevance to conditions in the underdeveloped world. One must take note of the inhibitive influence of attitudes of self-disparagement and servility to western scholars which are so widely prevalent in most

³ The writer of the poser has made a very apt reference to the widely-shared view that 'if the country has achieved any economic advance, the economists have contributed little to it' In this background one can also refer to the experience of other countries like Russia and China where professional social scientists played a negligible role in the economic transformation of these countries. In fact, the westernised social scientists as a social class were considered to be a drag rather than an aid in the task of planning for a new economic and social order.

I should make it explicit that I do not agree with the equivalence of liberal economics and Marxism which is implied in Myrdal's statement. In other words, Myrdal's statement here is open to question in so far it implicitly denies the revolutionary intellectual potential of Marxism for underdeveloped countries. In so far as Myrdal's statement unplies a rejection of Marxian theology or of a conception of Marxian valid for all countries and all times, I am in total agreement with his statement. In other words, one cannot but agree with Myrdal if he suggests that a fresh study of the underdeveloped countries on the basis of the Marxist method would take one beyond the sterile and ossified versions of Marxism widely prevalent in under-developed countries. In his Asian Drama (Vo I, P 21) Myrdal himself has indicated the potentiality of certain aspects of Marx's conceptual apparatus for analysis of the social situation of underdeveloped societies He has, in fact, wondered why very little fresh analysis of the problems of the region in Marx's terms is forthcoming, while essays in the western tradition are abundant.'

native universities and other academic centres.

One should also not ignore the influence exerted by the lure of easy success and recognition which leads talented scholars to follow the line of least resistance and to conform to the established modes of thought and practice. Equally strong is the hold of 'careerism', the lure of material advance and stability through conformity with the demands of the academic priesthood.

A key role is played in this respect by formal and informal links of many native academic establishments with institutions and Foundations of affluent countries which command enormous financial resources, and in many cases, even political influence. The allurement provided by these national and international agencies in poor countries is a powerful source of material and intellectual corruption of the intelligentsia.

It should not be overlooked that, thanks to opportunities for visits to western universities and academic centres and to academic collaboration with affluent countries, the acquisition of scientific 'skills' has generally gone hand in hand with the economic enrichment of a section of the intelligentsia. Thus, in all big cities the foreign-returned intellectuals constitute a distinctly identifiable social stratum, enjoying material prosperity and a sophisticated style of life unknown to other sections of the intelligentsia.

Of greater significance, however, is the fact that academic collaboration with the western countries has mostly lent support to the forces of conservatism than of reorientation in the social sciences. It has, in fact, inhibited any bold initiative from the majority of established social scientists towards a serious critique of the dominant approaches and conceptions. In fact, the patronage extended to nonrelevant trends of thought and their spokesmen by academic establishments of affluent countries constitutes one of the important reasons for their tenacious hold on academic centres of underdeveloped countries.

Another major factor contributing to the non-relevance of social sciences is that social scientists in countries like India have been exposed mostly to western influence and even among western countries India was dominantly exposed to British influence in the past and to American influence in recent years. The absence of live intellectual contact with countries of the Asian region and the total absence of any contact with China the only country which faces similar problems and has emerged as the innovator of an entirely new model of development-, these factors have helped to perpetuate western dominance in the field of the social sciences.

And vet another crucial factor contributing to the non-relevance of social sciences in countries like India is the continuing use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction and research. An intelligentsia which resists the use and cultivation of native languages is actually resisting the process of striking roots in the native soil. Such an intelligentsia is basically unwilling if not hostile to the idea breaking its physical and mental ties with the upper class elite and to take sides with the forces of social transformation. Social science in the hands of such an intelligentsia has, therefore, an elitist character oriented towards the maintenance of the status quo; it seldom acquires a truly revolutionary quality.

All these factors are, however, only aspects of much bigger forces at work in underdeveloped countries. One has to understand the close link-up between ideas and interests in order to appreciate the deeper sources of opposition to changes in the realm of ideas. The fact of the matter is that the dominant groups in the western countries may be reconciled to limited progress in the underdeveloped world. But they are generally hostile to the prospects of their former colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America achieving full economic and intellectual independ-

ence and thus undermining the age-old hegemony of western powers.

Similarly, there are also privileged groups within the native societies which may well be reconciled to such a pattern of limited development as does not threaten their own privileges and power. But, they are hostile to the search for a new perspective or a path which promises emancipation to the hitherto deprived and disadvantagclasses. Conservative and radical approaches in the social sciences, therefore, are ultimately rooted in conflicts of material interests; they are also not inde-pendent of the social and political movements generated by these conflicts.

In India new national and social urges are now beginning to find expression in the new goals of economic self-reliance and garibi hatao. The Indian political leadership has also called for self-reliance in the intellectual and mental spheres. A more favourable context thus is slowly emerging for a renewal in the sphere of social science as well.

The emerging social situation is throwing up new problems for research. It is thus making it possible to distinguish between the more important and the less important questions from the social point of view. As the social sciences begin to tackle these problems and think afresh about approaches, concepts and methods adequate to the handling of these problems, the sharp conflict which exists today between relevance to the social sciences and relevance to society is bound to diminish in course of time.

And, as the question of relevance is tackled, the demand for quality will also make more sense. It should not be overlooked that in underdeveloped countries to press for quality alone without raising the question of relevance is to perpetuate stagnation and to discourage innovation.

Quality will follow rather than precede relevance in the context of underdeveloped countries.

Conspiracy of incompetence

ASHIS NANDY

THE distinction increasingly being made between the quality of social science research and its relevance to this society is a dangerous trap. It is an artificial distinction designed to give prominence to relevance at the cost of quality. As if the inept could ever be relevant.

In some societies and at some historical points there may be justification for drawing attention to the malignant growth in non-cumulative, pseudo-competent, empirical studies and anaemic and toothless formalisations, both of which shirk the responsibility of facing the crises within the dominant scientific paradigms. It may be necessary at those moments to affirm that changes in the economic, political or cultural environments provide the social scientists with new opportunities to extend or supplant their theories and new 'experimental situations' to test their hypotheses. It may also be necessary to point out that by ignoring these opportunities and situations social scientists could be refusing to recognize that many of their older theories were wrong and most of their favourite concepts impotent.

It is in this special sense that the present western use of the fashion word 'relevance' has some meaning. This is another way of saying that even in the West the emphasis on relevance is a defensive attempt to deny the true sources of anxiety, namely, the insensitivities of the social researcher and the instability of his paradigms.

But, if the westerners catch cold we necessarily have to sneeze. Therefore, without knowing the subtler meanings of the vogue of relevance elsewhere, we are convinced that our social sciences too suffer from the fashionable virus of irrelevance.

Even if for the sake of argument one assumes that social research

sometimes is competent without being overtly—mind you, overtly relevant, according to whose criteria is it irrelevant? Relevance after all has to be judged by someone and unless one visualises who that someone is, it becomes an empty slogan. The outer community is certainly a bad judge of science as we know from the days of Bruno and Galileo. Also, it has always considered the Thomas Alva Edisons more relevant scientists than the Einsteins. To be sure, even the scientific community can go wrong. as the cases of Darwin and Freud in the last hundred years suggest. But on the whole, the scientists have done better. And we shall go wrong less frequently if we let them decide how relevant is a given piece of work according to the internal standards of the discipline.

But this is not the relevance, some hairsplitters may say, many of us are talking about. The relevance which has become a catchword is relevance in the sense of social usefulness. I am afraid, I find this other version of relevance even more noxious.

In India, where quality is as yet scarce, such relevance-peddling will promote incompetence. which is in plenty. We have had nothing but relevant research during the last two decades. Since the beginning of the nineteen fifties we have been producing with fanatic zeal hundreds of unreadable scientific profanities on the panchayati raj agricultural system. extension. family planning, public administration and management. Few more hundreds of studies have been done on social stratification in villages, inter-community perceptions, social distances and prejudices. The number of village studies run into thousands. And now election

studies and socio-economic surveys are being bred at a rate which will put to shame our population growth rate. Prima facie, all of them are relevant. Prima facie very few of them can be used by anyone, let alone the policy maker (if that happens to be, by any chance, your concept of relevance).

All this merely underlines the difference between relevant subject and relevant research. It requires little intelligence to identify relevant subjects. That is why one rarely finds, at least in India, research which is subject-wise totally irrelevant. It takes more imagination to make the research on those subjects relevant. Who is more relevant than Kane, in spite of his concern with the apparently irrelevant Dharmashastras? Who is more useful than Rao, in spite of his abstruse theoretical work on the sampling theory and canonical factor analysis?

Who is more irrelevant than those crafty hacks who fill the Indian professional journals on psychology and political science, manufacture the more bizarre studies of the IIPA (an institute which died in its infancy from an acute attack of relevance, but cannot be buried because everyone is looking for a full-sized dead body), fill the thick seminar proceedings of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study with mostly the thin air of Simla, produce a majority of the journalistic narratives of the School of International Studies with the skill of news commentators and the bravado of specialists, and sire many of the ICSSR supported reports, theses and publications which are beginning to descend on us like an avalanche?

Two of the disciplines in India which have performed relatively better are statistics and economics. And it is instructive that the best researchers in these two disciplines are not as obviously relevant as their compatriots in the other social sciences. They are theoreticians and model builders in mathematical statistics and econometrics, relevant only to their own disciplines (though attentive to the experiences of the country going through a gig-

antic socio-economic experiment). One may be sarcastic about these economists with dessicated post-Keynesian models in their heads, and maudlin tears for the Indian down-trodden in their eyes; but, they have shown that disciplines which ignore their pettily relevant researchers may actually do better.

The more publicly accredited a problem,' a student of researchmanship has said, 'the less valuable the research.' This is a wise saying. The sociologist, the psychologist or the economist should know enough about his discipline and his subject matter to decide what is relevant. Other social scientists are there to check his propositions, methods and findings and to evaluate if his claims of relevance are valid. Unfortunately, Indian social scientists have not shouldered this responsibility of evaluation. That is why we see the spectacle of sanctimonious politicians, sleepy bureaucrats, retired academics and illiterate ideologues trying to set the norms of social research. These clowns have become important because we have given them importance.

Why have the social scientists failed to function as critics of the social sciences? This is the pivotal question on which the question of relevance ultimately hinges. And, it also brings us to the most sordid, even if obvious and banal, part of the story. We, the Indian social scientists, are serious neither about our standards nor about our ethics. We write good reviews on the books of our friends, bad reviews on the books of our enemies. We support the incompetent, because they are politically powerful and support us in return; we undervalue the competent just merely because they are less of a nuisance and need not be placated. We hobnob with the politicians and we squirm before the bureaucrats.

Perhaps, in a poor country social sciences are bound to be low-ceiling. We see our colleagues not only as academic competitors, but also—and in fact predominantly—as competitors for resources. That is why our factionalisms have no basis in scholarly controversies. Even when apparently politicized, they

are in essence expressions of jealousy, greed, distrust and pettiness.

L can go on in this vein, but it will add little to our understanding of the environment of the Indian social sciences. After all, these features are not even peculiar to India or to social sciences. Even where the social sciences have 'made it' we find much the same phenomena. And, in India itself, the other sciences are no less plagued by non-academic vulgarities. What is more typical of us is that our system is so foolproof that it is almost impossible to shift the few grains from the chaff. In other countries and in the other sciences, the competent at least manage to have their niches and get their voices heard. They have also some resources and some autonomy. In our desert, we have far fewer oases. We have, of course, the caravans of the mediocre which, to mix metaphors, are perpetually moving towards the lowest common denominator.

Secondly, our academic nationalism has been very selective. We have applied the principle of Indianization not to the contents (as we should have done), but to the standards of the social sciences. In our researchers, as much as in our cars, goodness or badness have meaning only with reference to others within the country.

For some, of course, this import restriction has paid very rich dividends. In gratefulness, they have created a climate in which any talk of competence makes you suspect. After all, no self respecting Indian social scientist talks of it. No wonder, in spite of all our nationalist social scientists, one sees very few creative works of which one could be proud as an Indian. If one suspects a discipline or a theory to be ethnocentric or conservative, one has to call witnesses from the West. Notwithstanding all the radicals, good Marxian interpretations of the Indian society have come predominantly from outside. Even our nationalism and radicalism are second rate and second hand.

Thirdly, while the incompetent are organised and vociferous, the competent are not. We do not nur-

ture and respect our gifted men unless they use a part of their talents for the purposes of cynical bureaucratic power seeking and faction fights. The reason why Indian scholars show promise in their twenties and thirties and wither away in their forties is obvious. Their creativity and commitment during their most formative years are not reinforced, but their slyness and cynicism are. And because every man has both sides to his potentialities, the society gets what it wants. By the time a man is in his mid-forties, there is a perfect fit between him and the demands of the prestigious academic bureaucracies in India. Naturally, these sour, frustrated men and the organisational nets within which they work have a vested interest in neutralizing the isolated competent

What are the implications of The problems are so immense that any programme which does not envisage large-scale structural changes in the academia and in the bureaucracy of higher education, particularly the UGC and the Education Ministry, would seem predestined to abort. But talking about fundamental changes has also been one of the time-tested techniques of doing nothing in this culture. To avoid falling into that trap, let us think of some of the possible short term steps that could be taken.

Perhaps, one needs today most of all small, closed, face-to-face groups within which the competent could provide support to each other, fight zealously the stupid and the intellectually dead, and maintain high standards of scholarship. The professional societies cannot play this role. But small interdisciplinary departments, academies or institutions with highly restricted membership (sometimes with a small set-up and budget, sometimes without these, but always avoiding the other paraphernalia of office) just perhaps might.

Such groups will probably not attract the power hungry and will be ignored by the powerful. But they will matter to the younger social scientists who will know where quality lies. It will also perhaps mean something to the elder statesmen of the social sciences if they are black-balled out of these groups. Over a period such groupings may acquire enough momentum to become reference groups for our social scientists.

Secondly, there is the issue of building indigenous scientific traditions. Building such traditions is not a matter of isolating the Indian academia. Nor can it be facilitated attacking 'imperialist' social sciences. The first is a slogan designed to increase the demand for western-educated and westernised social scientists by controlling supply. Which is why this very group of men are most vociferous in this demand. The second ignores the fact that 'imperialist' social science is ipso facto bad social science. And it will be eliminated by a better social science if we could only produce one. But to say any such things is to betray one's friends. This is because most of us would rather make a living out of shrill denunciation of others than concentrate on the work which remains to be done.

Call this pontification, call this tautology, academic autonomy will require a serious academic effort. I doubt if such an effort can be mounted by the babus of this generation. Defeated on every front, the middle class intellectual has become cynical and blase and contemptuous about his own abilities and origins. In fact, in no other sector of the Indian society do I see so much concern with the West in the name of being anti-West. (Ravana, before his birth, chose to stay close to Rama by being born as his enemy, so that he could win the favour of Rama in the end. By the same logic, many of my acquaintances would be spared the experiences of an Indian social scientist, unreconciled to his true authority. in their next birth.)

I hold no brief for the western social scientists. In many, perhaps most, cases they have been handin-glove with the establishment. This was as much true of the British historians and anthropologists in

colonial India as it is of the academic satraps of the American militarists today. And one must fight their buffooneries at all levels. But this cannot be done by abdicating the responsibility of building a more responsible social science for India and, also, in the process, for the world. There is need today for such a conspiracy of the competent in India.

Thirdly—allow me, at this point, to ride a psychologist's hobby horse—we are yet to start thinking in terms of persons, rather than in terms of establishments. We have during the last twenty five years created a Kafkaesque world where we first decide upon an area of relevant study, then look for real estate, budget and posts and then, ultimately and almost reluctantly, for persons to work in it. Because the total number of truly first-rate social scientists in India will certainly not exceed the redoubtable figure of seventy five (it is likely to be closer to fifty), what we generally get for our new research institutions are careerists and opportunists who are willing to give up their specializations for non-academic gains.

Even from the point of view of social intelligence, we would have done much better if we had simply forgotten social relevance or had, as a compromise, concentrated in subjects important to policy makers at a given point of time (say, agricultural extension, family planning or organizational behaviour). But we prefer to set up elaborate research bureaucracies trying to find non-existent scholars for this or that programme in their hundreds.

One person who understood this well has died three weeks back. Mahalanobis did more for the Indian social sciences by his work than by his radicalism or nationalism. The latter characteristics might have made him a more admirable man to some (as his paternalism and ego-centricity made him less likeable to others), but only the former has relevance for the social sciences and for India. If we do not recognise this, the conspiracy of the incompetents will defeat us and we shall also in the process lose the battle of relevance.

The audiences

S. SABERWAL and L. M. KHUBCHANDANI

THE poser sketches the contemporary scene in the social sciences in terms of binary choices concerning (1) one's image of one's tasks—social engineering or achievement of critical understanding, (2) one's audience—the government (or industry or other paymaster) or the

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public, taking for granted one's profession as an important audience, and (3) the scale of one's research operations—large or small. Though straying occasionally into tangential areas, this comment will focus on issues conctrning one's audiences: professional, governmental, and public.

Concerning the professional audience, the poser says rather

^{*} Saberwal works in sociology, Khubchandani in sociolinguistics

innocently that research papers and monographs 'are addressed to a body of specialists and their quality can be judged only by specialists and according to professional standards.' Implicit here are two levels of evaluation: (1) of a particular paper or monograph and (2) of a scholar overall, either through evaluative debate on his work in depth or through competibetween institutions attracting him if he makes a mark. This last mode of evaluation—of competition between institutionsis almost unheard of in India. This, of course, is connected with the fact that very few academic institutions have—or care to have -academic reputations which might be enhanced by trying to concentrate talent; and almost all of these few are content to induct their own students into faculty positions in course of time. The consequences of such in-breeding are well known.

Nor can one find much by way of evaluation of particular papers, monographs, or a scholar's output over time. M. S. Gore, a sociologist, has recently said:

'Our professional journals do not have strong review sections. There is still a tradition of politeness in reviews or a total absence of comment when one does not agree with another scholar's methodology, point of view, or conclusions. Usually, discussions in seminars are much more frank and open than are the reviews published in professional journals. Cumulation and continuity can only be established when scholars take each other's work seriously and are articulate in their response to what is published.'2.

Amlan Data, an economist, is more trenchant:

'Just as citizens have certain duties on the performance of which depends the health of the body politic, so members of the republic of scientists have certain

duties which cannot be neglected without detriment to the development of the sciences. Among these is the duty to bear witness to the truth as one perceives it and to offer as well as to welcome informed criticism of ideas presented for public acceptance, for this is crucial to the progress of ideas. No such sense of public duty seems to inform the community of social scientists in India. There is a lot of personally motivated adulation and acrimony, but very little of that stimulating criticism which forces the scholar to reformulate his ideas at a higher level.'3

M.S. Rajan, a political scientist, accepts this as 'the chief reason for the present state of social science research' and attributes it to an absence of 'an agreed forum, procedure and form for making responsible and mutual criticism.'4 Both Datta and Rajan would like a Journal for the social sciences, devoted entirely to book review articles, and the like.

Whatever one's prescriptions for coping with the situation, it is clear that the professional audience in the social sciences—which the poser takes for granted—is conspicuously absent. As a community, we have not made the effort, corporately and individually, to nurture the media which sound academic communities have for continuously, publicly evaluating the scholarly worth of individuals and their works. Consequently, although colleagues working within a speciality may evaluate each other soundly, these judgments are not made public. In this situation, relatively less worthy persons, devoting themselves to the techniques of impression management, find ways to get senior positions in universities, professional associations, governmental advisory bodies, selection committees and the likemen who, in better organized

The social sciences' relationship with the government is multiplex. On priorities in research, the poser is undoubtedly alluding to the recent, elaborate attempt by the Indian Council of Social Science Research to locate 'priority' areas in the whole gamut of the social sciences. The issue is tricky. The most productive scientific communities in the world allow their priorities to be determined by individuals'6 perceptions—changing from day to day, year to year—of the imminent breakthroughs in concept, method, or insight.7 Given their generally high levels of individual competence, sustained by continuous, usually ruthless, professional evaluations, the system The ICSSR's exercise in works. priorities constitutes a perhaps realistic judgment to the effect that a majority of Indian social scientists is incompetent, unable to locate individually the key emergent areas for enquiry. We hasten to add, though, that this assessment of the ICSSR strategy is incomplete: J. P. Naik, its Member-Secretary, has said repeatedly that only 60 per cent of the budget will go to 'priority' areas, the balance will be available for open competition. For now, this will do. The 'priority' areas will thus serve to

True, some of these 'professionals' carry

academic systems.' Suffice it to say that

a stamp from the

better organized

academic systems, would have been thrown out with their first attempt at research⁵: the academic damage resulting from this situation is clear for all to see.

What is wrong with social sciences in India? ICSSR Newsletter, December 1971, pp 3—5

^{4.} Editor's Mail ICSSR Newsletter, March 1972, p. 9.

these latter are organized with reference to their own societies. Students from Afro-Asia looking for PhD's are often accepted as a part of the White Man's burden: to be borne with fortitude but not to be evaluated for serious scholarship.

Or, in these days of team research, the perceptions of team leaders who also deal with the funding agencies.

^{7.} See Michael Polanyi's eloquent statement, "The Republic of Science: its political and economic theory', In Education, Scientific policy, and developing societies (ed. A.B. Shah), Bombay Manaktalas, 1967 (reprinted from Minerva), Polanyi describes there several official, abortive efforts to set 'priorities' for research in the physical sciences in Britain.

² Introduction. In Beyond the village. sociological explorations (ed. S. Saberwal), Simla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, in press.

accommodate (a) research by those who need some consensual reassurance regarding the propriety of their pursuits: for them the ICSSR priorities will do what the PhD guide in India often has to do for his student, namely to 'assign' a topic for research, and (b) research in areas which the government may find necessary. Let us hope and pray that the priority lists can be adapted continuously to reflect the changing perceptions of the community's more insightful members, though caution is indicated: some of the surveys to determine the priorities were remarkably inadequate and-this is the greater danger—the operators have been vigorously trying to get 'priorities' fixed so that the resources will flow their way smoothly.

Our relationship with the government has had another important strand in the last couple of decades.8 Our university system is among the most conservative in the world. lacking the capacity to stir new intellectual currents or even to notice currents begun elsewhere before the passage of a generation or two. The absence of appraisal mechanisms, noted earlier, contributes to this deadness. Yet, during the last two decades, our record in the social sciences shows some achievement; in the context of the third world, these achievements are perhaps outstanding. How did this happen?

Clearly, those who have led these movements in India drew their strength not from the university establishments but from outside. Some, such as the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, were dependent on non-Indian sources for some years. However, all of them, located within the universities or outside, have found support their somewhat rebellious postures from their contacts in the government, whether with political leaders or with technocrats in the ministries. With this support, they were able to outflank the eminences who sat in the citadels of academic authority. To have to rely on governmental patronage to individuals for academic renovation may be distasteful (for, a still newer breed of academic politicians is interested more in personal than in academic advance); yet, we must notice that the full complexity of our social reality does not easily submit to binary distinctions.

Several other strands can, potentially, enter our relationship with the government. For example, the Home Ministry's confidential files would almost certainly have information on individual academics engaged in political activity of a sort disapproved by the central government (say, in support of one or another kind of regionalism). There is no indication yet that this information has been used to harass individuals, but this could happen if political control comes to rest in more nervous hands.9 Whether or not we would then be able to defend our right to unhindered expression would depend largely on what levels of integrity we have meanwhile built into our academic and larger public life.

Or, again, there is no indication yet that the Indian government has used our field reports for party, political or other manipulative purposes of an unacceptable sort. The United States government has tried to do this in the Third World so often in recent years that some concerned U.S. scholars find that they cannot, in good conscience, publish any of the results of their research. This danger is limited

for us so long as the peoples studied, the social scientists, and the politicians are part of one political frame, with the politicians answerable for their actions to legislatures and to the wider public. However, those who have power (and wealth) can try to use social science knowledge to tighten their hold over the rest of us. When that happens, it will be necessary for us, qua social scientists, to enter the public domain in defence of the social sciences.

Whatever one may think of Marshall McLuhan's proposition that 'the medium is the message', in India, incontrovertibly, the medium is the audience. If we write in English, we address the English-knowing one per cent (or less) within India plus a select international audience; by publishing abroad, the audience shifts further in the latter direction.

The poser notes that well over half of our people are illiterate. The current patterns of primary school enrolments do not presage a change in this situation, and the bulk of the illiterates are securely below the poverty line. Given their poverty and illiteracy, we need not consider them as an audience, actual or potential. The bulk of those who are literate come through an educational system which is run at low per student cost and which seeks, primarily, to train its students to memorize and to pass examinations. The skills of handling information and solving problems are not its concerns. These skills are made available in some measure to a small minority of our population which goes to high cost schools where it also acquires upper class manners (including the correct lilt for speaking in English).

Since this minority also has easy access to the right networks of wealth and power, its members have more or less pre-emptive chances of capturing the elite positions in our society. Writing in English, we communicate only with this thin upper crust. There is little reason to doubt that these privileged of the land will use whatever we produce to advance

There is a third stand too. The government is the largest employer of social scientists in the country even if we exclude the universities, but this need not be considered here.

^{9.} In fact, there may not be much time to lose In one of the northern universities, known to be controlled by men of the locally dominant landowning caste, a couple of years ago a lecturer in one of the social science departments was found to be a communist. The Vice-Chancellor gave him the following options: (1) to cease all political activity, (2) to continue his political activity and to inform the Vice-Chancellor about his associates' activities continually, or (3) to leave the university. The gentleman is reported to have left the university no one, within or outside the university, defended his right to engage in the political activity of his choice.

See Delmos J. Jones, Social responsibility and the belief in basic research, Current Anthropology 1971, 12: 347—50

their own interests. By choosing to write in one or another language -or even at one or another level of 'difficulty' within one language -we also make a subtle, usually unwitting, choice concerning the distribution of information between different linguistic strata and thus indicate our preference for one or another form of social stratification. 'The public', then, is not the homogeneous mass implied in the poser; within it there are strata, and we decide which of these are worthy of getting our communications.

Indian society, then, like most complex societies is a multi-public society. Our social scientists have traditionally defined their publics narrowly, usually limited to each other and their colleagues abroad; mavericks with diverse interests and diverse audiences, like Nirmal Kumar Bose, have been exceptions. This reluctance to address diverse audiences may be associated with our patterns of socialization which channel interaction within the security of one's kindred or caste: the reluctance to relate with novel audiences may originate in unconscious fears of losing caste-or at least status.11

W e submit that the development and the continual exercise of this facility for switching audiences can be an important source for creativity. Preceding effective communication, we enter into an unconscious dialogue with our potential audience. This entails consideration of one's message from the other's viewpoint; and a change of audience would force one (a) to take account of another value system, (b) to redraw one's line between the relevant and the irrelevant, and (c) to re-think one's basic analytic concepts and categories. In the course of addressing Indian audiences, one of the authors of this essay has found the denotata

We do not suggest that communications with Indians are sacred -generating creativity-and those with westerners are profane. To repeat, we suggest that creativity probably arises if we maintain rapport with several sorts of audiences (although it may arise in other ways also). We in India have not sought to harness this resource for creativity. No Indian social scientist has worked closely with an Indian movie-maker to present his understanding of his changing society in celluloid—a medium which reaches an impressive audience by any measure. University Boards of Studies repeatedly face the problem of good social science textbooks employing Indian illustrative material: even for this task, central to our vocation, we have not shown much enthusiasm. NCERT has mysteriously discontinued-rather than extending to other fields—its programme for high quality school textbooks in history.

There is a large regional language audience: witness Gulshan Nanda on every railway book stall in North India; and the human interest side of social science data can hold mass interest. Individually and collectively, we have to develop the means to interweave such contributions to mass literature with what we write for the 'professional' audience. This is important, for as the poser says, 'the sociologist does not construct a new society as the engineer constructs a bridge; he only contributes to the awareness out of which people create their own society.'

of terms like 'language boundary' and 'mother tongue' in western linguistics to be inadequate, and the other has come to the conclusion that 'social inequality' is a far more relevant variable for appraising the key institutions of Indian society than most of those currently the rage in western sociology and anthropology (such as: modernization, Parsonian macro-analysis, or componential analysis).

The relationship between 'socialized in a caste society' and 'reluctant to address outgroups' is not one-to-one. in our image of man, there is room to outgrow one's incapacities. Were it not so, there would not be much 'social change.'

All the ifs

SABYASACHI BHATTACHARYA

WE are all 'social scientists' now. There is a general impression abroad that the social sciences are important. That they are too important to be left to the social scientists seems to be an implicit premise of a good deal of activity in the political arena. In that arena, to an extent, each public man (whatever the provenance of his mental furnitures) has always been his own social scientist. This is still true, with a difference: the services of the professional practitioners of these sciences is much in demand.

The increasing 'visibility' of the social scientists in India in various roles—as expert advisers in the different ministries; as members of governmental committees to frame or to review or to evaluate policies; as trustees of public money at the control points for the distribution of resources, especially education and research funds; as consultants serving private business corporations, etc.,—has been a marked feature of the last two decades.

Some of these incarnations (e.g., the last one) are less likeable than other ones. In most of these roles, one may possibly perform quite useful functions. At any rate, all of these open up prospects of advancement and have altered the structure of opportunities for those who have chosen one of the social sciences as a career. The social scientists—with the behavioural scientists in management consultancy and economists in the lead, and political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists and historians trailing way behind-have finally What does it mean for arrived.

the science and the society they profess to serve? To define this question and to raise some related issues may be worthwhile.

The 'social scientists' are a rather mixed crowd. The Indian Council of Social Science Research has decided to include in its National Register of Social Scientists professional manpower in a variety of fields: anthropology, demography, economics, history, international relations, management studies, political science, psychology, social work, sociology, etc.,—altogether fourteen disciplines. When we are talking of the social scientists we are lumping all of these together. Ideally, it would be desirable to disaggregate them. But, for purposes of our discussion we are not going to do so for the present.

Although as disciplines the social sciences are wide apart, as a professional group the social scientists have a great deal in common. While each discipline in this area has a kind of distinctiveness which militates against any ambitious generalisation about trends, our crude attempt to get a historical overview of some common elements in the environment of the practitioners of these disciplines should be provisionally useful.

An obvious fact about presentday social science research is that it is expensive. Perhaps the most well-known social science project in recent times was Project Camelot in the USA which had a six mil-

Annual Report, 1970-71, of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, (New Delbi, 1971) Appendix IV, p. 107.

lion dollar budget. A poor country cannot spend on all its research projects as much as the US Army did on that single project. Still, our social scientists do have projects which are expensive by the standards of our impecunious universities. The private sector has its own small private army of social scientists and one does not know how much is spent on research. But, judging by the ICSSR budgets, the academics in the universities are engaged in fairly expensive research work.

For instance, out of 74 research projects sanctioned by the ICSSR in 1970-71, projects costing half a lakh or more numbered 11 and those costing 25 to 50 thousand numbered 19. The grant-in-aid to the top five projects totalled 6.5 lakhs. One should add that the ICSSR, an excellent agency for funding research projects, has the projects thoroughly vetted to reduce costs to the minimum.² Cost of research is genuinely going up. One of the consequences is the increasing dependence of the academics on external sources of funds.

The extent of this dependence can be gauged by some figures made available by the Committee on Social Science Research in their report published in 1968.3 Externally sponsored research projects constituted 43 per cent of the total number of projects started by the university departments (anthropology, sociology, economics, and political science) in 1964-65. For research institutions the proportion of sponsored projects was 94 per cent. One should note that these sponsored projects in the universities are likely to be the larger and more costly ones which would dominate the university scene and attract more prestige and personnel than the non-sponsored research of individual teachers, irrespective of the quality of the work.

Dependence on sponsors for expensive research work leads to,

In the case of government sponsorship, however, the outcome is not exactly predictable. For one thing, the chances are that the funds would be sought and obtained with difficulty by the academics concerned and the bureaucracy would be indifferent as regards the output and possible use of the social scientists' research so long as certain regulations are complied with. It is an exceptional case where the government, with some clear goal in view, sponsors research at a university. A sort of benign neglect allows the academic in a sponsored project a large degree of freedom. This is particularly true of research projects on the grant-in-aid basis as distinguished from what is often called contract work for government agencies. Nevertheless, overmuch dependence on government patronage is a little disquieting.

Ocial scientists are surely aware of the implications of such dependence. Yet, participants in programmes to provide information and advice to the government, in this country and abroad, rationalise in various ways their decision to take part. It is interesting to observe how the American social scientists who participated in Project Camelot justified their involvement in it.4 This was, as it is generally known, a project involving sociologists, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, and foreign area specialists, aimed to investigate the causes and pro-

After the notorious Chilean debacle and the cancellation of the project in 1964, Horowitz points out, the social scientists in the project justified their participation in these terms: it was said that in place of the microscopic enquiries what was needed was a comparative, cross-cultural, inter-disciplinary 'big picture' project of contemporary relevance; that the government and the army 'had to be educated' from inside; and, further, that the resources available in the universities and the structure of the typical college and university were not suitable for fundamental and large-scale research. All this sounds rather familiar to Indian social scientists: one might have heard similar pleas in, say, economics faculty senior common rooms in Indian universities.

It is not suggested that those depending on government support are of necessity corrupted and defiled. After all, there is no Indian university independent of government support and the pure-minded 'anti-establishment' intellectual would be hard put to it to serve anywhere in this country: he cannot, in fact, work in the present system and, without inconsistency, claim any moral superiority over those more deeply and directly involved in it. Nor is it being suggested that there are in this country research efforts as obviously abhorrent as Project Camelot.

The history of the latter project is of interest because it underlines two features of the relationship between the social science experts and the government which commissions them: first, that certain values and assumptions of the latter influence the experts (e.g.,

some time if not always, a sort of client-patron relationship. Recognition of this fact was implicit in the government's clamp down on foreign sponsored studies in India. (About a quarter of research projects analysed by the above mentioned Committee was found to be foreign sponsored). That the social science based consultant advising the corporate sector on labour management and the like would not identify himself with the businessman who hires him is unexpected.

cesses of revolutionary movements in the underdeveloped areas of the world; nominally under the aegis of the American University, Washington, D.C., it was (a fact unknown to many participants) sponsored by the US Army with a view to developing a strategy to combat possible revolutions and insurgencies in some Latin American and Asian countries.

^{2.} Ibid, pp. 80-95.

^{3.} Report of the Committee on Social Science Research (Planning Commission, New Delhi, 1968), p. 60, table 1.10.

^{4.} Irving Louis Horowitz (Ed.) The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot. Studies in the relationship between social science and politics (Cambridge, Mass. 1967)

in this case that 'stability' is desirable, that 'breakdowns' or revolutions are to be countered at all costs); and, second, the social scientist may unwillingly enter into a subordinate role and become not so much an applied social scientist as a supplier of information and advice to a powerful client.

This would also apply to the situation of the social science consultant vis-a-vis the corporate sector. In fact, such possibilities are likely to be far greater and more pernicious. But links between social science work and the private sector have not yet been established in a big way. In the institutions for labour research, management training, etc., the so called behavioural scientist has been marginally a beneficiary of the recent expansion in research and consultancy opportunities in areas of study relevant to marketing and personnel management. C. Wright Mills' denunciation of the 'illiberal practicality of the social scientists serving commercial corporate interests⁵ is beginning to seem relevant in India as well. However, we have only witnessed the beginning of a trend and it will be premature to ascribe too much importance to the business corporations in this context. It is the government and its myriad agencies which deserve more attention.

The report (1968) of the Committee on Social Science Research also underlines the dominance of the government and its agencies in the field of social science research, first, as a sponsor, and second, as a direct employer of research personnel. Of the research project on which data were available to the Committee, 67 per cent were funded by the government as sponsor. This was in 1964-65, four years before the ICSSR was set up. In the case of research institutions, the dependence on government funds was heavier than in the university-based research pro-

As for government conducted research, it has been estimated that

there were no less than 65 units in central and State governments conducting social and economic studies in 1966. They range from well-known agencies such as the Registrar General's Office, Labour Bureau, Anthropological Survey of India, Economic Advisor's offices in several ministries, the Reserve Bank of India, the statistical and programme evaluation units, to such obscure ones as the State level tribal research institutes or the Directorate of Psychological Research in the Ministry of Defence,

Less than one-third of the departments and agencies responded to the queries of the Committee. These had conducted in the period 1959-1966, 326 projects in economics (mainly economic surveys and evaluation studies) and 116 social studies (including public administration).⁶ It is difficult to judge how meaningful was it to tot up the number of projects, but it does indicate the magnitude of governmental involvement.

The social science experts directly serving the government in the upper echelon of some of the sixty odd agencies mentioned in the 1968 Report and others who join them on short term assignments, often in advisory capacities, occupy a special position. They have, if not access to power, access to those who have power. Their proximity to the arena of policy-making does not necessarily mean effective participation in that process.

Whatever may be the scientific benefits of what Edward Shils describes in glowing terms as 'the marriage of social research and practical policy', there are obvious limits to the role played by scientific knowledge. Max Millikan, with his hard-core C.I.A. and State Department experience behind him, is nearer the mark when he says

that the social science expert's role in the government is to 'extend the policy-maker's capacity for judgment—not to provide him with answers' to provide information but not to make decisions.8

The experience of some experts in the Indian corridors of power is often bitterly spoken of by them. It will be absurd to imagine that there was some conspiracy to trap them in positions where they were impotent to influence basic policies. Such experts, in the nature of things, operate in a system of inbuilt inequality in respect of the use of the intelligence and advice, even if the powers that be do not exercise the right (which they ultimately possess) to delimit the research and advisory functions assigned to the expert. The social scientist at no time and place is totally autonomous. But his role is most circumscribed when he offers his skill and research products to a single buyer rather than to the general public.

The latter course of action may have a political impact—if the specialists' message can be put across to the lay public. This is what most social scientists shy away from. In the pre-independence period the situation was somewhat different.

F or instance, the political commitment, arising out of a sense of social purpose, was quite clear in the anti-imperialist stance of our economists. Some of them were 'used' as experts by the government. We do not remember Romesh Dutt as a member of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation (1907), G. K. Gokhale and D. Naoroji as members of the Commission on Expenditure in India (1897), or V. G. Kale as a member of the Indian Tariff Board (1923-25). At these points these economic thinkers came closest in their career to taking part in policymaking. But they are remembered not for their role as advisers and participants on these occasions —it was their message to the larger

⁵ C Wright Mills: The Sociological Imagination (London, 1959) pp. 92-99.

^{6.} Report of the Committee on Social Science Research (New Delhi, 1968), pp 9—10, tables 18, 19, 1.11.

Edward A Shils. 'Social Science and Social Policy' in ET Crawford & A.D. Biderman (Eds.) Social Scientists and International Affairs: a case for a sociology of social science (New York, 1969), p 41 et seq.

Max F. Millikan: 'Inquiry and Policy the relation of knowledge to action' in E.T Crawford & A.D. Biderman op cit. pp. 277—284.

public, their writings as critics of the empire, their impact on nationalist thinking which entitled them to the role they played in Indian history.9

The sense of purpose which characterised the early economic thinkers survived the professional, isation and institutionalisation of the science of economics up to the pre-independence decades. It is interesting to recall Professor K. T. Shah's preface to a research work published in 1923: 'I have been accused by some critics of an undue warmth of expression in my works. In this connection I might reply that 'To expect an Indian economist, with pronounced nationalist views, to discuss the questions with which the book deals with complete freedom from bias would, at the present time, be futile'.10

In 1934, Professor Brij Narain said in his address to the Delhi University faculty: 'I do not deny that a political element can be discerned in the writings of most Indian economists. But ... economics is to us an intensely practical study. Secondly, in the discussion of causes of wealth and poverty which are beyond the control of the individual, one is obliged to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with government policy.'11

In the post-independence era, a process of de-politicisation of the social sciences has been at work. This trend is most evident in the discipline of economics because of the contrast with the firm political commitments of some economists of the earlier generation. (And, of course, certain autonomous developments in the discipline itself, accounts for this trend in part.) But the economist cannot be singled out for dereliction of social duty. In fact, the economists' role in 'social engineering' has a latent political aspect of which, by and large, they appear to be aware—

In general, social scientists, especially those of professional eminence, have been, not exactly striving (as Weber did),12 but drifting towards 'value-wise neutral' positions. The stress is on the cultivation of technical competence which is not a bad thing. But when it becomes an end in itself, the practitioner stops thinking, even occasionally, what it is for (apart from professional advancement). If he stops and thinks he will have to get back to square one. Lesson: don't.

What of the implications of this situation for social enquiries? First, it means an aversion to macroscopic enquiries and an eagerness to opt for research problems which are narrow, easily manageable, suitable for the display of technical virtuosity, and attractive to the dispensers of research funds. Second, it means a species of ahistoricism, a tendency to treat research problems in isola-

Third, it means, for the mature and best intellects, a disproportionate amount of energy being spent in the organisation rather than the actual work of research. Men who devote themselves to this end do a valuable job. Robert Anderson in his interesting study of the science organising roles of Meghnad Saha and Homi Bhabha, has laid bare a rather discouraging picture of the intricacies of the politics of science.13 It will be a pity if the best minds in the profession are tied up in the game of lobbying and in-fighting.

Finally, as Mills¹⁴ pointed out, not only is there the danger that the political perspective of the chief

which is more than one can say of many of their colleagues in other social sciences.

12. On Max Weber's views on value-free sociology, Alvm W. Gouldner 'Anti-Minotaur: the Myth of a value-free sociology in J.D. Douglas The Relevance of Sociology (New York, 1970).

client, the government, may unduly influence the orientation of research, but there may be a bureaucratisation of the organisation and the very operations of research, thus stultifying the spirit of intellectual enquiry. In research projects involving an army of investigators and research assistants and supervisors, bureaucratic forms of controlling and guiding the process of enquiry seem inevitable. Even in small-scale research efforts, in tightly knit teaching communities, the bureaucratic ethos asserts itself in inter-personal relations.

The present director of the Anthropological Survey of India conducted a study of scientists and scientific research organisations in India in relation to cultural traditions and institutions. One of the conclusions he reaches in his report (1970) is that the bureaucratic hierarchy in the national laboratories has constricted creative scientific work: "This implanted hierarchy...has been "naturalised" in the Indian cultural milieu by infusing hierarchic norms of the "gentry" and the "lowly", "zamindar" and his "subordinate officials"/"subjects", and head of the family and his subordinate relatives. The product of this naturalisation seems to be an essentially inefficient and scientifically uncreative bureaucracy.'15 Sinha made a study of research in the natural sciences. But possibly his observation is not without relevance in the field of social science studies.

This exercise in self-criticism has touched only the fringes of a rather baffling problem. There can be no cut and dried solution to help the social scientists out of their predicament. If they begin to look at themselves critically and apply their science to their own role in society, if the policy scientists abandon the purely prophylactic approach and address themselves to the question of fundamental change, if the academics can assert their autonomy... But one does not know whether all that is too much to hope for.

^{13.} Robert S. Anderson 'A contrast of pioneers in organizing science: Meghnad Saha and Homi Bhabha' (Mimeo, University of Chicago, 1970).

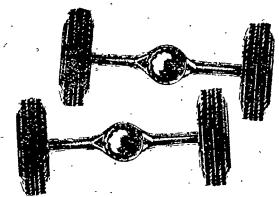
^{14.} C. Wright Mills: op. cit. p. 101.

^{9.} Bipan Chandra: The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India (New Delhi,

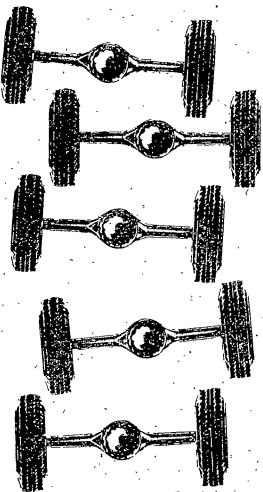
^{10.} K. T. Shah: Trade, Tariffs and Transport in India (1923). p. 2.

Brij Narain: Tendencles in Recent Econo-mic Thought (1935) p. 11.

^{15.} Surajit Sinha: Science, Technology and Culture (New Delhi, 1970), p. 149.



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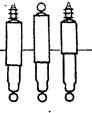
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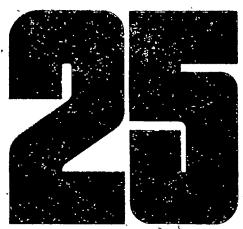
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HINDUSTAN STEEL

Communications

The problem of quality is central to a discussion on the social sciences in the country today. It is even more crucial than the question of relevance. The pursuit of an enquiry may have its relevance either in relation to a discipline or in relation to its application for extraneous use. But the two relevances are not necessarily exclusive. More often than not, the indebtedness between fundamental and applied research is mutual. Even problems undertaken for their high utility potential may yield unlooked for academic insights. With rare exceptions, as sometimes in mathematics, physics and philosophy, fundamental principles emerge from keen empirical studies. Concepts in the social sciences at any rate are not wholly abstract in spite of varying degrees of universal validity. They retain in a subtle way something of the regional concreteness of the empirical data from which they are abstracted. It is this concreteness which limits their universality. It also explains why modifications are made in supposedly universal formulations when a 'field' is discovered which refuses to fit into them. But it takes a perspicacious intellect to discover this. Lesser minds find irresistible the temptation to seize upon the similarities and ignore the variations. To this extent the regionality of a concept finds projection in the perception of a different field.

From the beginning, Indian social scientists tended to view their society and history in relation to concepts that were alien to them and to the formulation of which they had contributed nothing. They made no sustained effort to gather empirical data and churn from them concepts that would set in motion the process of interpretation and constant enquiry. This conceptive poverty made of the Indian social scientists a sinister kind of weathercocks who would belatedly record one or the other intellectual breeze from the West and turn accordingly. The lethargy for basic formulation seems to have been a logical product of the constraints created by foreign rule. The whole dynamics of the Indian mind, including its thrust towards its own liberation, operated within a colonial framework. The fact that history and economics were the social sciences that first attracted the attention of Indian scholars, the themes initially selected and the mode of their treatment would explain that Indian scholarship in these fields began compulsively by being derivative and reactive. In course of time the compulsion of a historical situation ossified into a habit of mind. And

habit dies hard. In order to maintain this plane of ease, the habit has been rationalised into something more respectable: ideology. The result is that the weathercocks are busy flocking to their respective ideological roosts, increasing their numbers, and extending their territories.

Apart from militating against fundamental research, this situation may lead to intellectual regimentation. With greater power and patronage coming into fewer committed hands, and ideology becoming of the essence of the quality of a work, more and more camp followers are likely to get into academic positions to the utter chagrin of those who decide to remain uncommitted as a matter of principle. That the process has acquired considerable momentum will be disputed only by the wilfully blind or committed. So far, only favouritism seems to have been there; but ideological victimisation may not be long in coming.

The urgent academic task is to get out of the vicious circle created by the lack of empirical data and conceptual weakness. Quality alone, irrespective of relevance, can get us out of it. For high quality, research even in those areas of the social sciences which have a direct bearing on our immediate social problems can as much contribute to the formulation of fundamental concepts as the latter can to a better understanding of society. Andre Beteille, therefore, creates an imaginary dichotomy when he asks: 'Should the social scientist pursue problems of research which he considers relevant and interesting without concern for the highest professional standards; or should he seek to attain the highest international standards without concern for the nature and significance of the problems 'he investigates?'

But, the question is how quality can be ensured. The ideal, one might call it naive, solution would be for the individual scholar to realise his duty not so much to his profession as to himself as a scholar. However, the conception of one's duty is affected by a system where positions are offered in proportion to either the manipulative genius of a person or the sheer quantity of his work. To remove, or at least to reduce, the premium on public relationing and worthless heaping is the task. But this is the same naivete differently stated. For this too will depend for actualisation upon people with a better perception of their duty and a less compromising frame of mind. Unlike the villain in our films, our

academic proconsuls cannot be expected to develop a sudden contrition and let go their stranglehold on the precious little empires euphemistically called universities, institutes, councils, etc.

The prospect is not altogether bleak. Uncorrupted by avarice and power, and immersed in his own universe, some of the self-abnegating 'plodders' will surely emerge with important findings and provide major breakthroughs in their respective disciplines, findings which even the most sinister weathercock will have to record. Stray individuals, not the system that obtains, seems to hold whatever promise there is for the social sciences in the country.

Sudhir Chandra
Indian Institute of Advanced Study,
Simla.

Your issue on 'Decentralisation' (No. 156, August '72) made sad reading. The selection of the contributors and their treatment of the subject make it clear that decentralization has been, by and large, conceived of in a mechanistic-administrative sense. If the selection part is mysterious, the treatment part is no doubt more easily understood. After all, one would not expect civil servants and those engaged in inert scholastics to go much further than that. One of them duly introduces the inevitable jargon like 'changemanagement', 'sub-system', 'duration expectancy', 'federalization', 'policy-relevant', 'loyaltystructure', etc., which have now become standard companions of empty scholasticism. Another simply puts it as: this is necessary, but that too is necessary, so a proper balance, the golden mean... Another is so boastful of the cabaret-cum-slum economies of the 'free-world' underdeveloped countries (including India), that he ridicules China as being in the 'bicycle stage', and ends up by advocating the West German parliamentary system for us!

The failure evidently does not lie in these contributions. It lies with the editor, and with two of the contributors-Sugata Dasgupta and Madhu Limaye-from whom one could expect better effort. Dasgupta indeed starts excellently when he says that his concept of decentralization is not that of a 'transfer of power from one principality to a few others' but that of 'fullest realisation of every man's dormant potentialities for economic growth and social development...' But then the answer he provides just transfers political power, if not to 'a few', to 307 principalities. After a quarter century's history following decolonization in the world, one should not still suffer from the illusion that a transfer of

political power is synonymous with economic swarai.

Surprisingly, Madhu Limaye does worse, and his failure is certainly conspicuous. For full sixteen-and-a-half of his seventeen columns he indulges in political-administrative nuances, and only in the last three paragraphs barely mentions the economic and social factors.

After all, the ultimate rationale of decentralization in a society lies in the inalienable right of all its members to a life of dignity and equality in opportunity. All other concepts such as self-determination, right of every community to develop according to its own genius, etc., draw their validity from this fundamental rationale, and would be empty cliches or mere sharing of booty among various cliques without it. Now can this right be ensured by mere drawing or redrawing of political-administrative boundaries or by defining and dividing various constitutional 'powers'? Can a dignified life to all citizens of India be ensured without radical restructuring of the current economic system, whose end is to build enclaves inside and repatriate wealth outside? Or of agriculture, which gives rise to Kulaks on the one hand and keeps the vast peasantry in penury and apathy on the other? Or of education, which is designed to maintain the advantages of a privileged minority and to nurture a degraded acquisitive culture? Or of administration, of culture, of science? It is in such restructuring that the essence of decentralization will lie. And any redrawing of administrative boundaries or sharing of 'powers' will be relevant only in so far as these facilitate such restructuring and its further-

It would indeed have been highly instructive to listen to a seminar on decentralization developed along these lines. SEMINAR has evidently failed in this. Looking at the present and some of the recent issues, one wonders whether SEMINAR too is becoming a forum for the usual cocktail seminars of our Society—which are one of the structures that a genuine decentralization would seek to destroy.

Kshirod Ranjan Bhattacharya Mysore

The problem in SEMINAR (156, August 1972) rightly begins with the question: 'But what does "decentralisation" really mean?' A difficult question, indeed! Sugata Dasgupta pleads for a 'specific distribution of powers and functions between villages, sub-divisions and districts on the one hand and between the "region" and the Centre on the other.' P. C. Mathur says that 'the prescription in

the poser ("we have to put 'decentralisation' at the centre of the stage. We have to give it all priority and work towards the realisation of the total 'system' from that vantage ground...") of system-change for India defies all these canons of change-management.'

An important canon of change-management is that the 'strategy of change should be based on a systematic assessment of the past trends, present configurations and possible trajectories of change'. There can, perhaps, be hardly two opinions about decentralisation of power and functions in this larger national context. But the question is also, whether 'decentralisation' applies to 'administration' or just anything and everything including the Services. SEMINAR should have appropriately discussed this question also with a view to identifying the correct perspective of 'decentralisation' and areas to which it need not be applied.

Just by way of illustration, one could recall the observations of the Estimates Committee (1965-66) in para 58 of their 93rd Report: 'It is of great importance that the Central Secretariat Services should have a wide experience of the various activities of government. Too much or too rigid decentralisation of control in regard to Central Secretariat Services is likely to lead to results conflicting with this objective... That is, decentralisation in respect of these Services (Central Secretariat Service, Central Secretariat Stenographers' Service/this should rightly be called the Central Secretarial Service, and Central Secretariat Clerical Service) should be applied with caution, clearly identifying the areas where such decentralisation of functions would be really useful.

In fact, the experience of the last ten years would prove beyond doubt that it has only created more problems than it sought to solve, and especially in the case of C.S.S.S. the problems have a tendency to be compounded with every bit of remedy. point is, when on the one hand we are thinking of organising the All-India Services for new branches of disciplines, why should we disintegrate the already integrated services. Decentralisation of functions (a few specified ones) in their case may be for functional, administrative purposes, but decentralisation of control and management means an entirely different thing. Decentralisation of control of the powers and functions of the administration in sociopolitico-economic realms, it will be appreciated, should not lead to decentralising the vital arms of the basic services constituting the administrative system which has been built up with great effort. For Services like

the CSS, CSSS, CSCS, and others, it is centralised control and management which is really warranted.

Brahm P. Gupta, President, Central Secretariat Stenographers' Service Association, Delhi.

The impressions emanating from SEMINAR August 1972, on 'Decentralization' are confusing. On the one hand there is a whole-hearted plea for local autonomy with the power flowing from the bottom up, as in the poser, and on the other opposition to this proposal of the flow of power, as in Mathur's contribution. In between these idealistic and ultra-realistic positions, we have what might be called a centrist position, that of Madhu Limaye, and the curiously incomplete one of Dharma Vira who does not even recognise the district level, confining himself to Centre-State relations. Shankar thinks that taking 'decentralization down to the districts would involve too much dispersal'. Singhvi favours decentralization down to the district and recognises the need for Panchayati Raj type institutions.

There is, however, in all these contributions, no explicit recognition that though the two aspects of decentralization are related they spring from different problems. The issue of State-district relations is related to the continuing stagnation of rural, local life, i.e., to the questions of local initiative and local democracy, while the question of Centre-State relations is related to the problems of an emergent federalism. The issue of federalism, though important, is no longer crucial; it is local democracy and more precisely the removal of rural stagnation that occupies the central stage in Indian politics today. On this measure of relative importance Dharma Vira's contribution is clearly irrelevant and unfocussed. It de-emphasises local democracy when it ought to be emphasised.

The problem of decentralization has to be looked at in terms of a separation between the problems of federalism and local democracy. The poser rightly goes to the heart of the matter—the forgotten villages and districts. It may be romantically Gandhian as Mathur implies but it does focus on the core of the problem. If one may put it in a crude way, the post-Independence period has been one of 'federal' consolidation, one of the building up of a viable Indian political structure. The concentration has been on the 'federal' and States levels, Panchayati Raj notwithstanding. Indeed, it may be postulated that it failed partly, precisely because the Centre-State relationship had yet not been clearly defined and hence the attempt to define the State-district equation was structurally premature.

however, political scientists including Mathur agree that the national structure is more or less consolidated, only the details remaining to be worked out. The time has therefore come to pay attention to the district-State relationship. Local democracy now needs to be tended to.

The 3-tier scheme being advocated seems to be an admirable conceptual scheme. It is possible, though, that in its details it may vitiate the spirit of local democracy. At one point in his essay, Singhvi-wonders whether local institutions ought to be supervised and controlled by the State governments or be allowed autonomy. This is indeed the question which can make or unmake the 3-tier scheme. Clearly, supervision and control would imply only an extension of the existing structure to the lowest levels with its built in defects, obstructing interests and political highlandedness. The case for autonomy is undeniably strong.

It is clear that local democracy is not going to be only an attempt to bring the lower levels into the political process; it also, and should be, meant to stimulate local initiative which is, in contemporary estimation, the quality most lacking in rural areas, apart from resources, financial or technical. Supervision and control are not going to enliven indicative. Any wise parent knows that. The analogy is not superficial; the nature of authority is the same in both cases. Autonomy, or independence from petty interference, would certainly contribute to the development of initiative.

An 'organic' local community, that is, one which grows up from the roots and is self-governing, is naturally autonomous. The example of the earliest settlements in America comes to mind. These naturally autonomous settlements surrendered part of their autonomy as they became parts of the larger entity—the States. The process was repeated at the federal level.

But, most importantly, they retained a considerable amount of autonomy such as in primary education, health services, police and municipal taxation. These rights were guaranteed to them in the State constitutions, which differ from State to State, as were the larger rights of the State guaranteed in the federal constitution.

In India, we have to go about this in the reverse process. Very little autonomy rests in the local communities which are frequently play things in political hands. A case in point is Madhu Limaye's example of the taking over of the local transport in Delhi. Autonomy, in India, has to be given back to the local areas. The 3-tier scheme should

do that. To preserve it, the model of the Centre-State relation can be applied. The State, autonomous in its own sphere, exists in a co-operative frame-work with the Centre but it is also involved in guarded opposition to it. This tension between units and the whole is the essence of Federation and. combined with constitutional guarantees, a very good safeguard of autonomy. If this opposition is institutionalized, in terns of spheres of competence, at the State-district level then we have a safeguard of local autonomy. There is no need of a radical restructuring of power from the bottom up as Madhu fears; only an institutionalization of opposition and autonomy in spheres of competence.

This opposition will be productive of initiative at the lowest level in two ways; one, through the defence of the local domain against intrusions and two, through the attempt to secure from the State material requisites for its development, for inherent in any oppositional pattern is the fact that the opponents do not give anything to each other without a tough fight (the Centre-State analogy holds here, viz., the overdrafts). To avoid biases in favour of a region of a State (East and West U.P. for example), where districts compete with each other. there might be a statutory arbitration body controlled by the Centre. The idea is to preserve a clear demarcation of the respective areas of autonomy. Obviously, the weaker districts have to have greater protection and the States need not be so strongly protected.

The problem of local democracy is the problem of restoring an 'organic' aspect to the Indian local community. In a way, the problem of local democracy is the problem of any democracy. As Alexin de Tocqueville said in his Democracy in America, '... the strength of free peoples resides in the local community. Local institutions are to liberty what primary schools are to science, they put it within the people's reach; they teach people to appreciate its peaceful enjoyment and accustom them to make use of it. Without local institutions a nation may give itself a free government, but it has not got the spirit of liberty.'

Surely, then, those who argue against taking autonomy and decentralization down to the lowest levels do not foster democracy. It should be axiomatic that local autonomy and democracy are closely related and not a proposition subject to dispute. If it is subject to dispute we can conclude that vested interests stand in the way.

Pradeep Singh Delhi.

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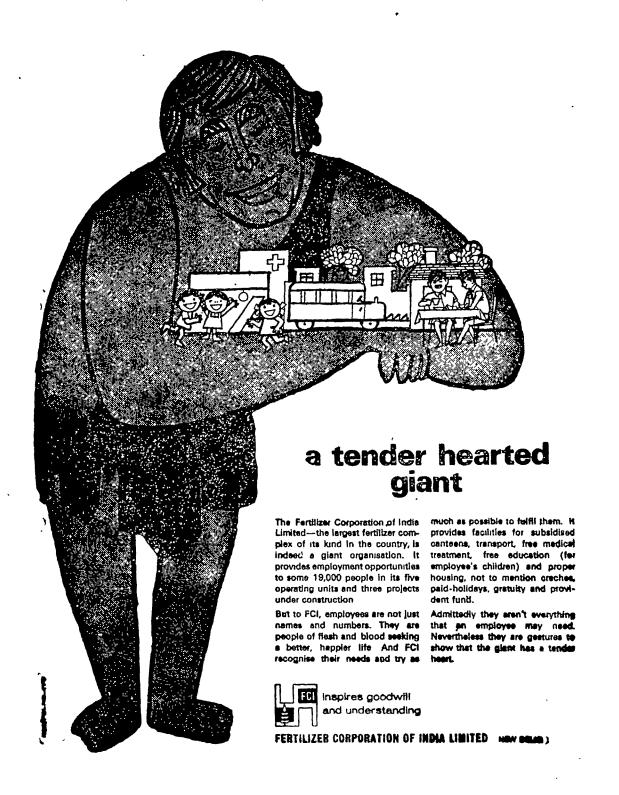


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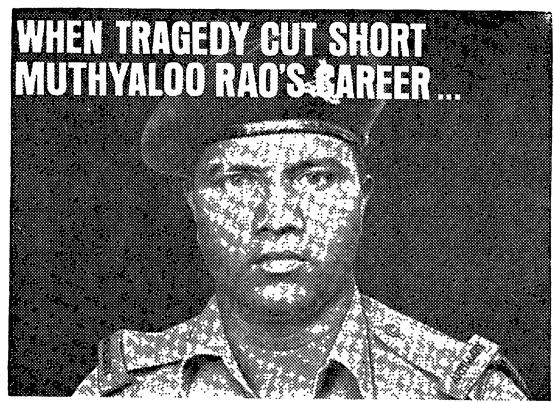


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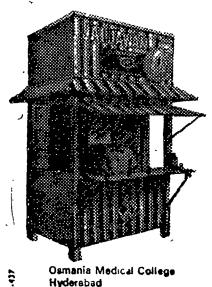
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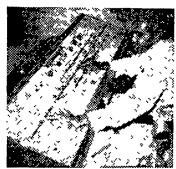
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(Photographs courtesy Northern Railways.) Everyday 65 lakh people travel by rail in India. That is more than the population of Switzerland. Eleven thousand trains are run daily on a track long enough to go round the world more than twice over. In the same 24 hours, the Indian Railways load six lakh tonnes of freight. The daily gross earnings total Rs. 3 crores. Participating in this massive operation are 14 lakh railwaymen, making Indian Railways the largest single employer in the country.

This, indeed, is a long, long way from 1853 when India's first train, with 14 four-wheeled teakwood coaches, carried 400 passengers on the historic 33-kilometre route from Bombay to Thana.

The phenomenal growth of the Indian Railways has been sustained by the progressive application of modern techniques and tools.

The Indian Railways have fast taken to diesel and electric traction. Today, 20,000 route kilometres of track is under diesel traction and 3,000 under electric traction. Mechanical signalling and inter-locking systems, supplemented by electric and electronic devices have been operative for quite some time. On the electrified routes, colour-light signals are fast replacing the semaphore arm. Centralised traffic control has been introduced on some important sections.

The Indian Railways were also among the earliest users of

computers in India. At present, they are the largest single computer user in the country.

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To run one of the biggest rail networks in the world, the Indian Railways maintain about 50,000 items of stores worth Rs. 363 crores. These include rolling stock components, electric traction equipment, signalling items, steel, cement and fuel. Computers are being used to great advantage in effecting substantial savings in inventory. A reduction of Rs. 16 crores worth of inventory was made in a single year through the use of computerized techniques.

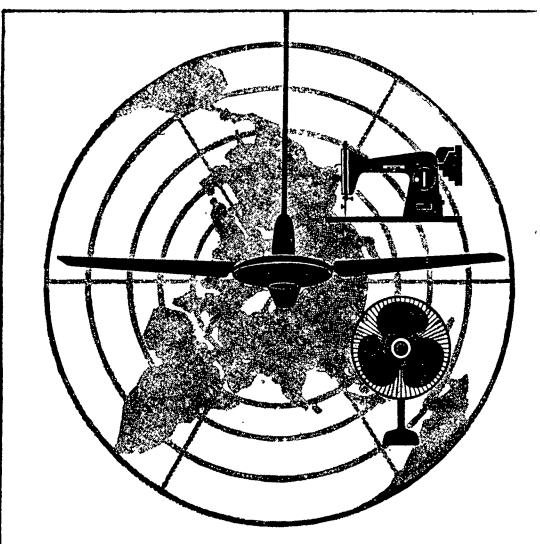
Modernisation and self-reliance go together on the Indian Railways. Progress in indigenous production, particularly of rolling stock, has been impressive, both in diversity and volume.

Today, the country is not only self-sufficient in most items used by the railways, but is also exporting them to many countries. All the three major production units of railways use computers for a variety of applications, including production scheduling and machine loading. The Diesel Locomotive Works at Varanasi has already turned out about 300 diesel locomotives of 2,600 H.P. The Chittaranjan Plant is manufacturing, besides other equipment, electric locomotives. The Integral Coach Factory at Madras makes the most modern coaches and equipment.

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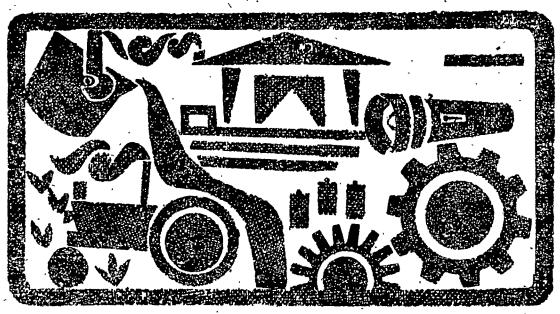
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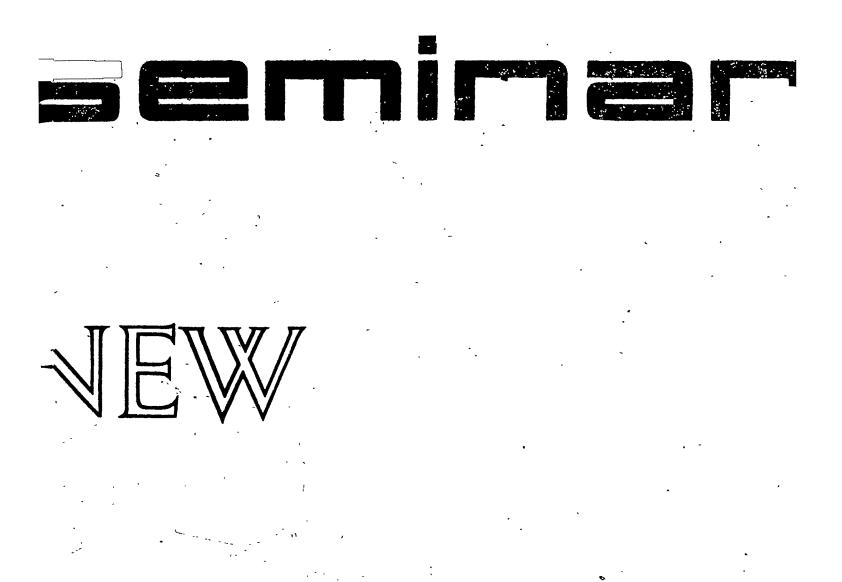
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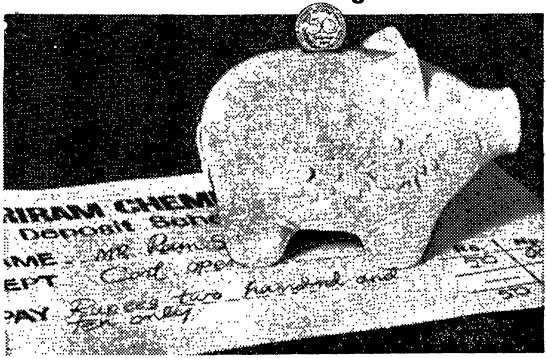
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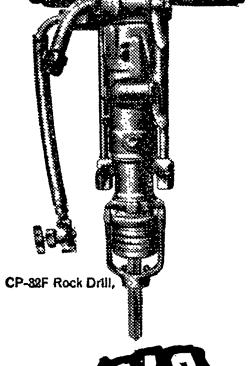
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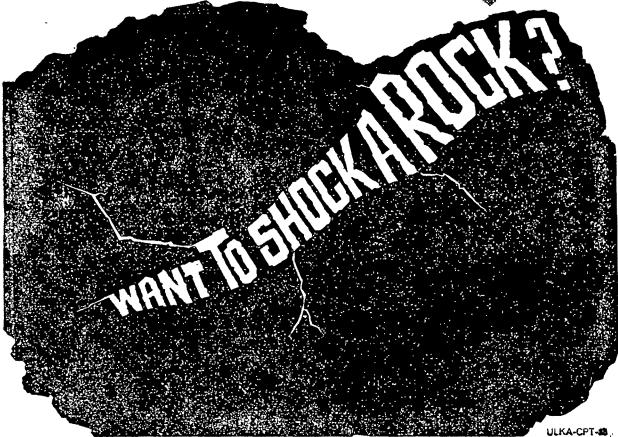
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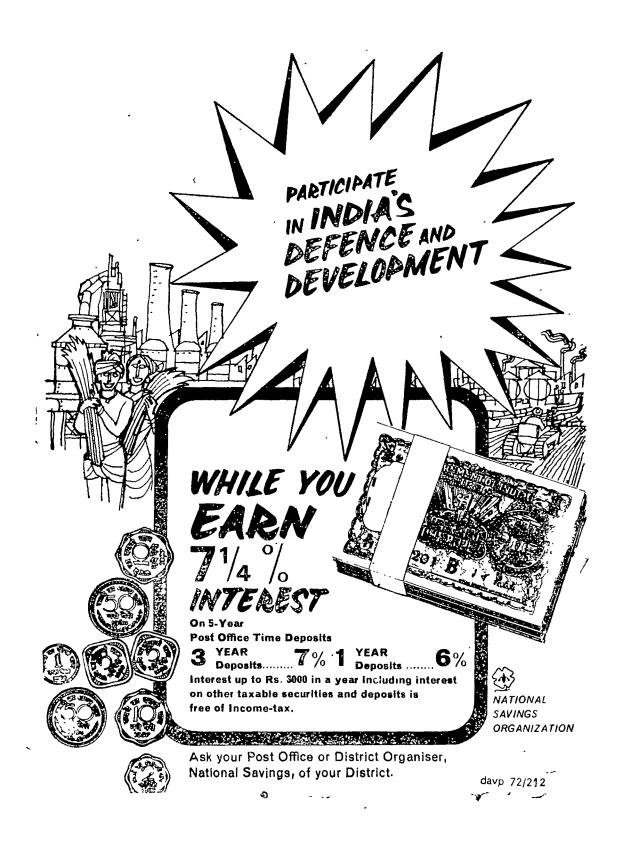
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publisher/ROMESH THAPAR

managing editor/RAJ THAPAR

production/TEJBIR SINGH

circulation/C. B. KU?

Published from Malhotra Building, Janpath, New Delhi-1. Telephone: 46534. Cable Address: Seminar, New Delhi. Single copy:

N. pence; 70 cents (\$). Yearly Rs. 20; £2.15; \$6. Three Yearly: Rs. 50; £7.10; \$16. Reproduction of material prohibited unless pen

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THE PROBLEM

A brief statement on the issue involved

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Father Paul Gueriviere, S.J. Lecturer in French, Loyola College, Madras

RETURN TO THE ROOTS Surindar Suri, Social Scientist, Friends World College, Bangalore

HUMANISATION

Paulo Freire, Educator, Head of the Educational Division of the World Council of Churches, Geneva

BREAKDOWN OF SCHOOLS Ivan Illich, Co-founder of the Center for International Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico

AN INTERVIEW

Kish Saint, Director, International Programme, Friends World College, USA

BOOKS

Reviewed by Donna Dumenil Suri

FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography compiled by Donna Dumenil Suri

COMMUNICATIONS

Received from Satish Saberwal and K.C.M, Raja

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury

The problem

To us in India education has come to mean little badges certifying the examinations passed, largely as a result of cramming an ill assortment of indifferent and unrelated facts, which are forgotten as soon as the badge has been acquired. This is then flaunted about the market place in a stampede for jobs which are becoming more and more scarce.

There seems little purpose in discussing how we came by our present educational policy, how we expanded it and how many more millions go through the machine today. What we do know and what is relevant is that what comes out of the machine is a rather bewildered mess of uneducated literates. They come pouring out in their thousands not knowing where to go and what to do.

The machine doesn't equip them. In most cases, it just shatters their natural equipment, whatever education they might normally have acquired as integral parts of their community whether rural or urban. It gives them complexes about being superior to those without the badge or degree, alienating them from their community, yet, within themselves they are insecure and uncertain of what the degree is worth because it doesn't seem to find them a job, nor does it give them confidence.

Government has done the expected. First a commission in session for long months, voluminous records, reams of paper used, much money spent — and then silence. A silence to be broken every now and again by ministerial proclamations or by the fury of students stoning establishment windows.

Meanwhile, every year we inflate the number of primary schools, middle schools, secondary schools and colleges without a

thought to what we put in them — what information, what values, what skills and what for. This is serious. It can set us back by many years in the future. It can produce a legitimate flood of frustration which nothing will be able to stem.

So, before further expansion, we need to think again. What is the present education worth? What are the needs of the country? Must we follow the patterns of the affluent world at such enormous cost? If not, how do we go about formulating a new system?

We must begin by defining education, trying to seek out the concept from under the debris of the structures we have tried so hard to erect. How hastily we buried Gandhiji's basic education policy, so blinded were we then with western forms. We couldn't see that it had the singular merit of attempting a break-away, of wanting to relate to the actual reality of India. We could have built upon the original idea, modified it, improved it. This itself might, hopefully, have forced us to reject the easy way of imitation.

Now, of course, there is no escape. Recently, somewhere, a large number of municipal school children were asked what they wished to be when they grew up "Babus", they said, almost one and all. If this is to be the horizon of our hopes, we have cause to despair. If the present system is cheating the young, it will have to take their wrath as well and it won't be able to withstand it. Something has to be done before we reach the point of no return.

This issue of SEMINAR is a very small attempt at re-thinking the meaning of education and its goals. Of the articles published here, some were presented at a Seminar on the Reappraisal of Education held at Bangalore in December 1971.

Areas of departure

PAUL GUERIVIERE

'What is denounced as "utopian" is no longer that which has 'no place' and cannot have any place in the historical universe, but rather that which is blocked from coming about by the power of the established societies'. (Marcuse)

FOR the past few years, youth all over the world has been 'contest-And today this contesting ing'. or protest no longer aims at a few specific issues like the Vietnam war, racial discrimination, sale of arms, etc., but at society as a whole with its political, cultural and socio-economic institutions. Indeed, a section of youth is contesting the very foundation, nay, the very right to existence of present society. For quite a few young people, the Vietnam war, discrimination, economic racial exploitation by neocolonialism, growing imbalance in distribution of wealth between industrialised countries and under-developed nations—30% of the world population disposes of 85% of its wealth while 70% share the rest, i.e., 15%!—, undue delay in the development process and inequality in the repartition of its benefits in many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, all these and many others are no longer issues to be treated separately. They are the symptoms of a deep rooted sickness that affects the whole society

all over the world. And that is why in many places youth is no longer satisfied with contesting issues alone. Appalled at the state of near total suppression to which. hundreds of millions of people are subjected in all parts of the world as a result of unjust socio-economic and political institutions, youth questions the entire value system and the goals which have shaped and guided their society and the community of nations during the last decades. They see the intimate connection which exists between the state of destitution of a vast majority of mankind and the structures of society both at the national and international levels.

Among this youth, students look at their universities with increasing suspicion. To the more articulate among them, universities appear as bastions of conservatism and vested interests which greatly slow down, or even nullify, any attempt at building anew along the lines of greater justice and freedom. They question the so-called 'neutrality' of the university and would probably agree with the following statement: "There is no such thing as a "neutral" educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the

younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom" '1.

The 'reformist' student who asks for participation in decision making does so in order to have the power to bring about those deep and radical changes which will make the universities at long last responsive to the demand of justice, freedom and human dignity. His demand springs out of the conviction that education can be a powerful means of social change. He sees the intimate relation which exists between education and social institutions and believes that ultimately education can transform society. In this he shares the conviction of a good many of his educators.

The more radical or 'revolutionary' student will also perceive the intimate connection between society and the educational system. But his assessment will be different. He will not believe that a mere reform of the educational system will ever solve the problem of an unjust social order and of poverty. He would probably agree with Richard Silburn when he says: 'The social structure which generates poverty generates its own shabby education system to serve it.'2

It is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into the debate between the 'reformist' and the 'revolutionary'. Our subject is 'Education—areas of departure: critic of the present and vision of the future'. The point however which is important to notice here is that we cannot evaluate a system of education unless we relate it to the socio-economic, political and cultural relations of the society within which it functions. A glance at the Indian scene therefore is a pre-condition to our assessment.

What characterises India is poverty. We all know it. It is

hardly necessary for us to be reminded of a few facts and figures. The press almost every day supplies us with them. Yet, because the magnitude of this poverty will weigh heavily on our evaluation of the present educational system, we cannot avoid recalling here a few facts and data.

In June 1970, C. Subramaniam, then Minister for Planning, made the following statement which certainly places before us the almost desperate conditions in which millions in India are living: 'Over 34% of our people eke out an existence of sub-human level with a per capita expenditure of less than Rs. 15 a month (less than 50 paisa a day.) Of these, a significant number live below the poverty line in conditions of chill poverty and severe destitution with a per capita expenditure of hardly Rs. 10 a In the same year, a scientific study made by the Economic Department of the Reserve Bank of India further unveiled to us the gravity of the situation. Assessing the level of living of the peasantry on the basis of food consumption, the study revealed that in 1967-68, 70% of the rural population (289 million) were below the level of poverty. More disquieting still is the trend revealed by that study. Although the growth rate of the Indian economy between 1960-1970 amounted roughly to a yearly average of 3.5 per cent, the same study points out that during the first 7 years of that period the number of 'poor' in villages increased by 17%: 'Of the total rural population of 355 million in 1960-61, 184 million (about 52% of the total) were absolutely poor, in 1967-68 the number of absolutely poor had increased to 289 million or 70% of the total rural population'.3

We have quoted the above figures because they are indicative of a trend which has come to be more and more accepted, namely, that under the present system while a few privileged are getting better, an increasing number of poor people in the villages and in the cities see little improvement in their situation, unless it deteriorates a little more day by day. The mechanism of this process has been analysed by economists of repute such as Gunnar Myrdal in his latest book *The Challenge of World Poverty*. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to go into the details of the socioeconomic and political process that leads to this state of affairs. We shall retain here some essential aspects of this analysis.

- 1. From the ranks of the middle farmers, moneylenders, middlemen and big landowners emerges a class which-often, with the connivance of the bureaucracy—is out for self aggrandizement and in the process pushes back further into poverty landless labourers and the small farmer those landholding is too small for his sustenance.
- 2. It is this new class of people who increasingly hold, along with economic power, political power, with the result that legislation or development programmes aimed at improving the conditions of the poor farmer or the jobless urban proletariat do not in fact reach them but too often benefit only those who already have a minimum of economic power or political influence.
- 3. This is of greater and immediate concern to us here. The educational system with an objective of democratisation in fact functions as an instrument which preserves the status quo or even strengthen the interests of the privileged. This, however, needs further collaboration.

he latest census informs us that illiteracy in India has increased in absolute numbers by 53 million in 10 years. There were 333 million illiterates in 1961 and 386 million in 1971. Meanwhile, if we look at the figures given by the Kothari Report on education, we see that the percentage of the total

Richard Shaull, in his introduction to Paulo Freire's, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 15.

Richard Silburn and K. Coates, 'Education in Poverty', in 'Education for Democracy, Edited by David Rubinstoin, p. 73.

^{3.} Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, January 1970, quoted in the New Year Book, 1971, p, 406.

One will find a detail analysis by V. M. Dandekar and Nilakantha Rath in Poverty in India, Economic and Political Weekly, 1971, Vol 6 p. 25—48 and 106—46.

expenditure for education marked for the lower primary schools—which cater to the illiterates—decreased from 31.9 per cent in 1950-51 to 20.3 per cent in 1965-66. We also notice that while for the same period the average annual rate of growth has been 8.4 for the lower primary schools, the rate for college education has been 12.7.5 We also know from other sources that forty per cent of the country's primary schools are manned by a single teacher.6

If we further look into what happens to the children (the majority of whom are from villages and slums) who join the lower primary schools, we are told by the same Kothari report that more than 56 per cent of them stop coming to school even before they have completed the lower primary stage. We are further told that 65 per cent of those who drop out do so on account of poverty.7 Meanwhile, money is lavishly spent on colleges which produce unemployed gradu-

In 1970, the National Council of Educational Research and Training published an all-India report of their field studies in the sociology of education. We give here some findings which seem to us Despite the fact very revealing. that 80% of the country's population is illiterate, there are no more than 25 per cent of students at the high-school level or above, who are drawn from homes with illiterate fathers...The urban manual group is never represented by more than 7 to 10 per cent of the student body in any State.8 Therefore, the same report had mention-'On occupational and economic criteria, therefore, it would appear that the educational system tends to draw students more from the relatively upper strata of land owners and cultivators in the rural areas and white-collar workers in the urban areas.'9

In an article by Amrik Singh data are provided which convinc-

ingly show that there has been a progressive increase in the proportion of students coming from income groups of Rs. 500 and above. And these are the students who generally have 'the influence and pulls' to get the renumerative jobs while the students coming from the lower group will most of the time be happy if they get at least a petty job-although they might have had to struggle much more in their studies to make up for the handicaps of their social background.

In his analysis entitled 'The Crisis of Indian Education', Amartya Sen shows that while other sectors of education are being starved of funds, higher education is being pampered. He has deployed a wealth of data in support of his argument and shown that because it is the middle class which stands to gain by expansion of opportunities at the tertiary level (higher education) and it is this very class which is vocal. More and more funds have been diverted to higher education with the belief that it is the right of the educationally privileged to study further at the expense of society and it is a right that is exercised throwing children out of school.10

It would therefore seem that Indian society is drifting away from its ideal of equality of opportunity for all and that definite trends towards elitism can be traced in our present system of education which in fact becomes more and more an instrument in the hands of those who retain economic and political power to promote the interest of their group, neglecting the under privileged masses.

W hat is more disturbing, however, is the fact that the students themselves seem to give-along with the rest of the academic community—a ready acquiescence to this state of affairs. Rarely do we hear of students and teachers taking action in favour of workers or

peasants. Their demands too often centre around more facilities, while the illiterate masses are not even getting the minimum education they are entitled to due to lack of funds.

W. S. Woytinsky, in his book on India, recalls his experiences in Russia during his youth and reflects: We heard complaints about mass unemployment among young graduates of the universities, but we could get no answer to the question: Why cannot a million of them be mobilized for rural teaching? Such a mobilization would be possible if Indian intellectuals felt the urgency of primary education for the village as keenly as did the Russian intellectuals in the day of my youth'.11

Myrdal remarks that When a country becomes Communist, a vigorous campaign is usually waged to make the whole people literate within a few years. And this is so because any attempt to create an integrated nation with wide participation of the people assumes greater literacy. In fact, the monopoly of education istogether with monopoly of ownership of land—the most fundamental basis of inequality, and it retains its hold more strongly among the poor countries.

The consequences of the imbalance of the present system of education in favour of the privileged of the colleges and at the expense of the illiterate masses affect the life of the whole country. This explains how legislation and development programmes never reach the masses. What is lacking in India is organised pressure from below on the part of the masses of people, effectively directed toward defending and promoting their interests. This has made possible a political stability that is tantamount to stagnation in regard to urgently needed economic and social reforms.' The only remedy to this situation would be a vigorous programme of adult education whose objective would not be

^{5.} Kothari Report p. 467. 6. Indian Properties Indian Express July 22, 1971.

^{7.} Report quoted, p. 157 and 159
8. Report quoted, p. 79.
9. Report quoted, p. 86.

II. and I2. Cfr Myrdal, The Challenge of World Poverty.

so much to 'teach the people to read and write' but rather to make the masses conscious of the state of deprivation in which they live. It would mean that we adopt the pedagogy suggested by Paulo Freire in his book Pedagogy of the Oppressed. The first priority should therefore be given to a programme of education directed to the 386 million illiterates of India. believe that this would be the surest way to transform the present society into a truly egalitarian one. We probably have much to learn from the Chinese experience in this field.

India has pledged itself to socialism. But socialism is much more than a mere economic system. It is a way of life. It is a conception of man and history that demands priorities and abides by values. One may safely say that such values and priorities are practically totally absent from the present system of education, at every level, primary, secondary and university. As a matter of fact, our present system of education is a reflection of Indian society still very much dominated by caste and community feelings, authoritarianism and paternalism and even a certain fatalism. Whether it is among the student community or among the teaching community, these are the attitudes and values which permeate the whole atmosphere of schools and colleges. And this brings us back to the fundamental problem which the radical or revolutionary student put to us at the beginning of our discussion: Can we build a system of education whose values will be different from the surrounding society? In more leftist parlance, can a system of education, which is a super structure, live on values and abide by priorities which are not yet accepted and sustained at the 'base'? Should the reconstruction of our educational system begin with the base, i.e., the masses or with the 'elite'? All the educational reforms initiated have concentrated on the tertiary level, the university, the 'elite'. They have failed, as other socio-economic reforms initiated from above have failed. This is probably the fundamental question which should exercise our mind.

Return to the roots

SURINDAR SURI

MARX said: the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas of society. In a class society, the imposition of these ideas on the subject classes is the basic function of education. Educators who do not want to become ideological instruments in the service of the ruling class face a virtually impossible situation, for the definition of truth, knowledge, beauty is determined by the class interests of the exploiters—the element

of class corruption in them cannot be precisely determined. One faces the danger of throwing the baby out with the bath water. One may deny human truth which predates and survives the domination of any given class, thus becoming a know-nothing intellectual, unless one becomes an accomplice in exploitation.

Class conflict in society is, however, at the same time a struggle of ideas and beliefs between the different classes. The ruling class and its spokesmen decry and mock the beliefs and ideas of the poorer classes. These are always primitive, stupid, superstitious, unclear, unscientific, inelegant. The mind of the poor people is undisciplined, unintelligent, unperceptive, inattentive. The art of the poor is crude, unaesthetic. unformed. In contrast, the self-image of the ruling class is intelligent, rational, realistic, dedicated to truth and beauty. Mostly the ruling class and its ideologues succeed in inflicting their judgment of the lower classes on the latter, so that they feel about themselves what the upper class does-unintelligent, uncouth, without ideas, or culture worthy of admiration. culture' survives; it may even flourish, but it is often underground, hidden from the sight of the upper classes who consider it blasphemous, immoral, arrogant if they come to know of it.

Over the centuries, there has evolved a pattern of imposition of the ideas of the ruling class on the masses. This has crystallised into a system of education; it is the pedagogy of oppression and exploitation. In times of historical transition, when the hold of a particular ruling class on the society is weakening or, as in India, in the period when the domination of the ruling class is not fully established, the entire system of education—its method as well as its content. its values and procedures, books, apparatus, physical plant, the manners of the teachers, their attitudes towards students. student attitudes and discipline, all these come under scrutiny, criticism and attack. Violence streaks through the campus: windows are broken, apparatus smashed, teachers assaulted. This is usually interpreted as the outburst of irrational or anomic violence. But it is 'systemic violence'—the violence that occurs when one social system is supplanted by another, when a whole new set of values emerges. With these, new classes and individuals emerge as the ruling class. Educators are less interested in the political process of systemic change than in the critical light it throws upon the form and content of education.

A fundamental re-examination of the system of education is occurring as a world-wide phenomenon to-day. Schools, colleges and universities are no longer sacrosanct; the education and instruction they impart is not taken for granted as good or even useful. The meaning and purpose of education, of formalised instruction and theoretical knowledge is being subjected to close and critical scrutiny.

Questions examined include the meaning and purpose of a knowledge entrusted to institutions and individuals who are distinct and separate from the rest of society and whose main function is to preserve, enlarge and transmit 'abstract' knowledge. Does not the institutionalisation of knowledge necessarily produce impoverishment of the society as a whole, the division of the people into those who are learned and those who are not where. by the definition, the intellectual status of the latter is lowered. The learned arrogate to themselves the function of deciding what is true and what is false, what is knowledge and what is superstition. In other words, an elitism is built into the educational system, since those who are inside the system are by definition guardians of truth. knowledge, education.

This is not to imply that the educators themselves become the ruling class. But, in so far as they succeed in implanting a feeling of inferiority in the masses (that they are ignorant, uncouth, etc.) these are readied for domination and exploitation. Basically, then, a system of higher education dedicated to truth and learning is embedded in a triadic relationship where the

dominant politico-economic class, the educational elite and the exploited masses form the three poles.

The more vigorously the educational elite pursues knowledge and learning, the more effectively it demoralises the masses, and the more successfully does the ruling class exploit them. For this valuable service, higher education receives all the material and moral support it desires—palatial buildings, big budgets, well-financed conferences, honour and honours. The more vigorously the educated elite pursues learning and knowledge, the more dedicatedly it tries to educate the benighted masses, the more effectively does it serve as the instrument of oppression. Higher learning is a handmaiden of class exploitation.

When knowledge is a socially alienated force, and the educators an alienated group, the masses are necessarily benighted and superstitious who need to be redeemed. There is no organic relationship between knowledge and society as a whole, for the two confront each other in hostility. Knowledge has to be imposed upon the youth that is far from enthusiastic to receive it. Systems of rewards and punishments have to be invented. Commissions of inquiry are appointed and there is much discussion in the press on student indiscipline, crises in the university. But the nature of the alienation is rarely discussed. Nor does it occur to most that the method of transmission of knowledge as well as the form and content of the knowledge is inimical to the well-being of the masses.

n India, the contradiction between the nature and methods of higher learning and the interests of the masses are more sharply opposed than in any society I can think of. Here, the conflict is not merely between the exploiting classes with the educators as their henchmen, but a basic contradiction between the system of education and the national tradition as a whole. The system of education, its content as well as its form, was an alien implantation. strange quirk of history, this alien plant has spread over the society

like a parasitic growth on a nutritious but helpless host. Recent studies of cancerous cyst-formation in the human body come to mind as a parallel. The contradiction between India's national culture and the European education is so great that India had no defence against it. Thus, Indian culture in the Indian mind is so well hidden below the encrusted pseudo-culture that for most of the educated Indians it is terra incognita.

The proliferation of institutions of higher education in India after 1947 reflects the paradox that some institutions of the alien imperialism have experienced real growth only after it was apparently ousted. The reason is not that the educational system answers to the real needs of the Indian society, except in the sense that an addict requires increasing doses of alcohol or drugs. For the fact is that folk culture and folk mind are not expressed in our system of education, nor is education accepted or assimilated into the deeper reaches of our society. To the common people, the educated person is a 'sahib' but to him they are the benighted masses, objects of his disdain or, at best, of his mercy or charity.

N othing is more indicative of the parasitic nature of education, especially higher education in India, than the employment mentality it engenders. A typical example is the following. Travelling in a railway train north of Bangalore we meet a young man and his father. They explain that they are returning from Bangalore, where the young man was trying to obtain a job as sub-inspector of police. Father and son spent a month in the city and two thousand rupees, trying all avenues of influence. But they failed and were returning home defeated. There is no question of a living, explains the son: 'My father has enough land to work on for the family. But how can I stay in the village after I have obtained a B.A. degree?' The father nods in assent.

But, the malaise goes deeper. Higher education cripples the youth psychologically and social-

Far from enhancing his ly. creative ability in relation to his social environment in such a way that the more highly educated a person is, the more creative he is, the more productive, a great cultural or economic asset. But, in fact, the more highly educated a person is, the more of a liability he is. He is not a creative person in that he does not perceive and cannot forge a creative outlet for his talent and energy. He does not even think of himself as creative but fit only for the dole.

The term 'educated unemployed' is a devastating commentary on the educational system which produces such a result. For, it is by no means the case that our society or environment does not have tasks to be performed, lags to be made good. The work that needs to be done stares us in the eye everywhere—hygiene, health, housing, food, culture—art, dance, music—clothing and what not. Somehow, the education system provides for an escape from these rather than foster the attitude of engagement in them, building confidence that these challenges can be mastered, providing knowledge and skills to that end, especially the social skill of harnessing the energy and awakening the creativity of the masses to achieve the tasks, for only thus can the problems faced by the masses be solved enduringly.

The educated person must be the catalyst in arousing the creativity of the masses, infusing them with self-confidence, bringing to bear insights about social mobilisation. What education must engender are not work-skills—which are easy enough to learn—but life-skills which equip the person to react constructively and creatively to his social environment, to assess its needs and tasks and to forge ways of responding to them. How to replace the present educational system by a new one along these lines is a forbidding task in the face of the politico-educational structure that now dominates India.

In its education India has yet to to achieve national independence.

It is usually the case and not the exception, that national liberation and social revolution are fused into a single struggle. Such is the case in North Vietnam today; it was the case in China, Yugoslavia, etc. But, in India there occurred an ironic twist. The movement that carried out the struggle for political liberation was itself largely the product of imperialist infiltration into Indian society. In other words, the leadership of the nationalist movement was culturally reactionary; its success and even more its consolidation after independence have increased the burden of the masses, the burdens of social and cultural oppression. The confusion here is deep and comlicated.

There is no doubt that the radical elite in power in New Delhi represents the drive for the political and economic emancipation of India from continuing foreign domination. I, for one, give it that much credit. But, culturally and educationally the present ruling elite is not merely the product of the imperialist system but it is engaged vigorously in expanding and strengthening the system. Similarly, I grant the elite—and parti-cularly Mrs. Gandhi—a sincere desire to uplift the masses economically and socially; but ideas and plans through which this is to be accomplished are the products of the alien-imperialist culture so that the effort is self-defeating. The burden of the masses is growing; they are continuously more repressed rather than liberated.

E ducation in India needs a revolutionary transformation. There are two aspects to the change. One is to bring education in India into harmony with Indian culture, Indian society, Indian tradition; to relate it directly to the needs and potential of our country; to produce a national system of education. The other is that education should be an instrument, a weapon, in the hands of the masses to win their emancipation from oppressors and exploiters. The two problems are distinct. Many countries have a national system of education that is neverthelss tied to class domination, e.g., Britain. France, Germany.

On the other hand, it is conceivable theoretically that the masses may be emancipated by means that are non-national, e.g., systematic practice of Marxist strategy. It seems true, however, that if the masses are emancipated with the use of an alien ideology, they will soon develop the national culture. as has happened in China. Nevertheless, the most effective way forward is the unity in a single movement of national liberation and the liberation of the mas-It is the argument of this essay that the system of education in India is the major block in the way of liberation of the masses and the growth of a dynamic national culture and society.

E ducation in India is the prisoner of myths that grew in Europe during the rise of nation States and bourgeois democracies. One of the myths is universal adult literacy. An eminent educationist has written: 'The French Revolution of 1789 presented a strange phenomenon. Amdist the savage violence of a popular insurrection, the people themselves claimed that among the rights of man there should be that of the possession of a superior language—the written language. It was a strange, unprecedented claim. It had nothing to do with the reaction against an oppressive power which impoverished the people. The people, therefore, did not only ask for bread and work, as they did later, following the teaching of Marx-nor did they limit their claims to change in the social hierarchies and political government... With the Code of Napoleon, compulsory education made its first appearance in the legislation of nations. And because Napoleon imposed his code on the peoples of Europe, this principle conquered not only France, but the whole empire on the morrow of the terrible destructions of the war. Compulsory education was established in many European States, then it passed to America and thus the slow and difficult task of eliminating illiteracy was started. All the

civilised nations of those days took it up. The education of the masses opened a new chapter in human history and it continued to be developed and expanded. It proclaimed a task requiring a mental effort from every individual; and the task was entrusted to the children.

'In the first years of the 19th century the child entered history as an active factor in the progress of civilisation. At the same time, however, he became a victim. The child could not understand, as did the adult, the necessity of this conquest, essential to social life. Mobilised from the age of six years, childhood only felt the sufferings of imprisonment and the slavery of being compelled to learn the alphabet and the art of writing. This was a dry and boring task, the importance and future advantages of which he could not appreciate. Banished to heavy desks, urged on by punishments, he had to learn under coercion, and to sacrifice not only his weak body, but also his personality. Thus it has always been in the painful history of men. All the great conquests have been made at the cost of slavery.' (Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man. Madras, 1969, pp. 105-

A s its other educational policies, India has adopted universal literacy without deep thought or planning of the peculiarly Indian social conditions, cultural traditions or national goals.

Everyone talks about the indigenisation of education in India but hardly anyone does anything about it. At the start of his inquiry into Bangalore University affairs, Dr. Samuel Mathai stated that higher education in India needed to be brought into line with the 'Indian genius'. This is a crucial issue, even granted that one's understanding of what comprises the Indian genius will be different from that of others. Instead of the term 'genius' one may use the words Indian traditions of cultural transmission and renewal', 'indigenous methods of studying, learning, teaching, etc.', interpreted in the context of the needs and aspirations

of the people of India today. By 'people' we should clearly understand the masses, and not merely the upper and middle classes. My submission is that the system of higher education in India today is ignorant of the indigenous traditions, it is unresponsive, indeed irrelevant and detrimental to the interests of the masses.

E ducationists in India and, following them, leaders in other areas of public life, are victims of the illusion that universities and colleges on the European and American pattern are the best vehicles for fostering higher learning. But recently this belief has come under strong criticism from thinkers such as Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich, Everett Reimer, Paulo Freire. A sampling of their critique of education is presented in this issue of Seminar. A radical critique of institutionalised higher education in the West should help in the self-emancipation of educational thinkers in India from the delusion that has seized them for almost two centuries and enable them to look with freshness and realism at their own current needs, mass demands, their own cultural traditions.

To say more at this point would require an analysis of the social history of higher education in Europe and the U.S.A., particularly its key role in strengthening the rising political domination of the bourgeoisie. One would have to study the circumstances under which this system was transplanted on to India in the early nineteenth century. In this context, the decline and disintegration of the university system in Europe and America is a matter of particular relevance to us, for it is in the background of this disintegration that we articulate the cultural, social, educational traditions and needs of India.

Suffice it here to mention that the social, cultural, and intellectual conditions of the people of India have always been and, despite two centuries of 'westernization', continue today to be vastly different from those of the people of Europe and America. We obviously need a distinctive educational system

that springs from our social and cultural heritage and responds to the needs of our people. The system grafted from Europe some hundred and fifty years ago has proved deeply parasitic. It has alienated the educated classes from the uneducated, cut them off from their own cultural heritage. It has helped to form an elite which is alienated from the past but equally from the contemporary social reality of India. The nemesis overtaking it is that of increasing violence. Violence is a reaction to the waste and uselessness of the present system of higher education. No amount of whitewashing or plastic surgery will protect it from destruction. Instead of trying to rescue it -which is not only immoral, but impossible—those who are committed to a constructive approach to the crisis of education in India should concentrate on evolving a new path that alone can serve the masses.

The point of departure for any discussion of higher education in a democratic society is the recognition that it must necessarily remain beyond the reach of the vast majority of the people. This may change if a truly classless society evolves. In the meantime, higher education remains beyond the reach of the vast majority of the people even in the most affluent societies and helps to separate the elite from the mass in more ways than one. In less affluent societies, the exploitative impact of higher education is vastly greater. Here the uncontrolled expansion of higher education is a much more serious matter. Strict planning and stringent control of the processes and products of higher education is needed to prevent these from exploiting the masses instead of serving them. The present political regime in India is incapable of controlling its expansion, disciplining its creatures or construcively using them. This is a serious weakness of the present political power structure in our country.

Education in India is not productive. Virtually all reports and surveys agree that the benefits from education in terms of strengthening the student's dedication to the ser-

vice of the community, enhancement of scientific or artistic creativity, or increased productivity of goods and services are very inadequate in relation to the investment of material and human resources. Higher education represents conspicuous consumption and produces conspicuous waste. This may not matter so much in countries which are producing ample wealth; it does matter very much in a country that is poor. Input-output ratios in education must be studied closely not only for the quantitative aspects of education—not merely in terms of drop-out ratios, numbers of graduates in this or that subject—but in qualitative

India is poor in material production but rich in its cultural heritage. Some other materially poor but culturally well-endowed people have tried to tackle the problem of education in a democratic spirit. One example is provided by Tanzania. Another is that of In both countries much China. care has been taken to ensure that educated individuals do not become parasites or, exploiters of their less educated brethren. Deliberate attempts are made that the system of education does not produce feelings of inferiority among all those who do not go very high in it. In China, a village may start a 'university' for pooling the know-ledge and skills that its inhabitants possess and enhancing these through self-education. All those attending universities must work among the people in the conditions of the latter. The number of students attending institutions of higher education is strictly regulated: indeed, its benefits are not such that there is a scramble for

The situation in India is vastly different from that in Tanzania or China; wishful thinking about transposing a system from elsewhere would only compound the evils that abound in our country. In education as in other spheres of public life in India, we must face the challenge that we steadfastly refuse to face. We always look for precedents and models elsewhere; we look to expert opinions

from abroad. To ourselves, the social reality of our nation is an area of darkness and we seek to illumine it by borrowed lights. Unless we face the darkness, until our eves adjust to it and the darkness itself becomes light, unless we stumble in the terra incognita and lose our way, until we learn its topography and contours, unless and until we do this, we will remain strangers in our land, alienated from our own people, self-alienated, our attempts to help will only hinder, the progress of the elite will mean deterioration among the masses.

E ducation in India is culturally repressive. It produces an abstract, ultra-refined higher culture of the educated classes which stand against and above the traditions, culture, arts, social codes of the masses. The original sin of higher education is to inculcate the belief that the former are superior to the This belief, as we have latter. argued earlier, divides the sheep from the goats. If higher education is regarded as the pre-condition of creativity, then the creativity of the masses is neglected, in fact derided and tends to shrink and wither. In an epoch of human history where an evergrowing number of societies are activating the masses, a country such as ours where the masses remain repressed and relatively inert is bound to stagnate and remain backward.

Re-awakening and regenerating the creativity of the masses is the task which confronts India. The prevalent system of education works in the opposite direction. Unless its focus and direction are reversed, education in our country will remain socially and culturally malignant. Students will throw stones at windows and professors. There will be little to inspire teachers, students or administrators to rise above self-seeking factionalism. Education in India must return to the roots. Only then will it embody the genius of India and flower; only thus can it cease to be an instrument of class domination and exploitation, but become a means of the self-liberation of the masses.

Li Liumanisation

PAULO FREIRE

No subject is exactly what it appears in the linguistic form in which it is expressed. There is always behind it something hidden which goes deeper, and this must be made explicit for it to be generally understood. In other words, to write about a subject means finding out as best one can how to get round the deceptive appearances which can lead to a distorted vision of it. This in turn means that we have to make a strong effort to

*This article was published in the Report on the 1970 Seminar "Tomorrow Began Yesterday" held by Educ—International.

separate it from these appearances in order to reveal it as a phenomenon existing in a concrete reality.

By this act, which is an act of finding out, we come to grips with the subject in all its wealth of inter-relations with particular aspects, which perhaps we do not even suspect exist, however closely bound up they may be with the subject. The more we are capable of this 'entering into' the subject, the more readily we can grasp it in all its complex dynamism.

To write about a subject, therefore, is not, as we understand it, a

simple act of narrating. Taking it as a phenomenon existing in a concrete reality which has a mediating effect on men, the writer has to take it from a gnoseological point of view.

In their turn, in adopting this same attitude, the readers have themselves to make the same gnoseological effort originally made by the writer, which means that the reader must not simply play the part of the 'patient' in this gnoseological 'operation'. Both, in fact, attempt to avoid the Socratic error which consists in defining a concept as the knowledge of the object defined.

Thus, what we have to do is not really to define the concept of the subject, not simply to describe or explain it by taking its implications as a given fact; we have rather to adopt a position of commitment towards it. This is the attitude of someone who does not really want to describe what happens exactly in the form in which it happens, because he wants to transform reality in such a way that what actually happens somehow happens in a different way.

This is not to say that this position of commitment with regard to subjects means that we start with preconceived attitudes when we set out to know reality as it is—attitudes in other words which could distort those facts in which the subjects are bound up, and end up by 'domesticating' them to our will.

In attempting to know scientifically the reality in which the subjects exist, we must not subject the facts to our truth, but, on the contrary, we must seek the truth of the facts. This does not mean, however, that, when we engage in the action of investigating reality scientifically, we should adopt a neutral position towards it or towards the results of our investigation. We must not confuse preoccupation with the truth which should characterise any really serious scientific effort, with the so-called

neutrality of science which in actual fact does not exist.

This position of commitment before the reality which we seek to know, results from the fact that knowledge is a process which implies the action-reflection of man on the world. The very teleological character of the unity action-reflection, that is, praxis, through which man, in transforming the world transforms himself, prevents him from being neutral. So, man cannot disregard this position of commitment, which in no way affects adversely our critical spirit or our scientific spirit. What is not legitimate for us is to be indifferent to the trend which might be given to the results of our scientific researches by those who hold the power of decision and submit science to their interests, and who impose their aims on the masses.

The position of commitment towards the subjects can also be explained by the fact that every subject has an opposite, and involves the carrying-out of obligations which are as strongly differentiated among themselves as the subjects are among themselves. Thus, when we enter into the comprehension of a subject, in the clarifying of it we clarify its contrary. This imposes an option on us, which in turn demands from us a form of action compatible with the obligations inherent in the subject. However, in carrying out these obligations, precisely when we have to be efficient, we are not able to practise the kind of action which implies a corresponding efficiency with regard to the contrary subject. The more we go on gaining knowledge of the socio-historical reality in which the subjects stand in dialectical relation to their opposites, the less is it possible for us to become neutral towards them.

For this reason, any declaration of neutrality implies a hidden option. We must emphasise that the subjects in their historical context comprise certain valuable orientations from the existential experience of human beings.

Our attitude cannot be other than this confronted with the subject which unites us—the humanisation of man and its educational implica-

In the moment in which we critically approach and recognise this process as a subject, we have not to take it as an abstract ideal, but as a historical challenge, in its relationship of opposition to the dehumanisation practice which is to be found in the objective reality in which we exist. Thus, dehumanisation and humanisation cannot fail to be part of the history of men, within the social structures which men erect and within which they live conditioned.

The former occurs as the coherent expression of alienation and domination; the second as the utopian² project of the dominated and oppressed classes. The former clearly suggests, in man's action on his social reality, an idea of preserving the status quo, the latter that of radically transforming the world of oppression.

We think it is important to underline this obvious relationship between dehumanisation and humanisation, as well as the fact that both imply man's action on reality, whether to preserve or to modify it. This is in order to avoid idealist illusions, one of which is to imagine that men can be humanised without the necessary transformation of the world in which they are oppressed and prevented from being men. This illusion accords with the interests of all those who enjoy favourable conditions of life, and reveals clearly the ideology behind which it attempts to conceal itself. This is the ideology of comfort, of conformity, of 'recuperation', which is incarnate in 'assistencial' forms of action, in which those who are prevented from being men are invited to await patiently better days, which may be long in coming, but which will certainly come...

There can no more be humanisation in oppression than there can be dehumanisation in true liberation. Moreover, liberation cannot

^{1.} See Paulo Freirei: The Political Literacy Process—An Introduction.

Paulo Freire: Cultural Action for Freedom. Harvard Educational Review and the Center for the Study of Development and Social Change, Cambridge, Mass. U.S.A. 1970.

exist within men's consciousness, isolated from the world; it exists in the praxis of men in history which requires a critical awareness of the relation it implies between consciousness and the world.

Here we have one of the fundamental points of the educational implications of the humanisation process, which brings us to the awareness of another impossibility, one we have underlined in a number of our writings—the impossibility of a neutral education.

J ust as the struggle for humanisation presupposes dehumanisation, whether as a concrete fact or as a threat, so both involve antogonistic educational praxis. Being subjects which are opposed to each other in any case, humanisation and dehumanisation necessarily have contrary educational obligations as The result of this is that the educator who chooses a humanist option, that is, a liberating one, will not be capable of carrying out the obligation bound up in the theme of his option, unless he has been able through his own praxis accurately to perceive the dialectical relationships between consciousness and the world or between man and the world.

Basically, the main difference between education as an obligation to dominate and dehumanise and education as an obligation to humanise and liberate is that the former is merely an act of transferring knowledge, while the latter is an act of knowing. These basically contrary obligations, which equally require contrary procedures, both bear on the relationship between consciousness and the world; it could not be otherwise.

When education is considered as an obligation to dominate in the relationships between consciousness and the world, the consciousness appears as if it were, as if it should be, a mere recipient to be filled; for education as a humanistic obligation to liberate the consciousness is 'intentionality' towards the world.

In the former case, the active character of the consciousness, the element which captures existing knowledge, is denied. Thus, when education is taken as an obligation to dominate, to negate the active character of the consciousness, it implies the utilisation of practices which seek to 'domesticate' it, and thus succeed in making consciousness the empty recipient referred to above. This means that education or cultural action for domination can never be anything more than the act in which the educator, 'he who knows,' transfers existing knowledge to the educatee, 'he who does not know'.

In the latter case, however, when the active character of the consciousness, which seeks and investigates, and which makes it possible for man to know in a critical way, is in evidence, its capacity for re-knowing or re-creating existing knowledge on the one hand, and of revealing and of knowing what is still not known on the other, is automatically in evidence too. If this were not so, that is to say, if the consciousness which is able to re-know existing knowledge were not capable of seeking new knowledge, it would be unable to explain the very knowledge which exists here and now. That is to say that all new knowledge is born from previous knowledge which becomes

Thus, education, or cultural action for liberation, instead of being the alienating transferrknowledge, ing of is genuine act of knowing which the educatees (who are also educators)—as conscious bodies in the world—go forward with the educators (who are also educatees) in the search for new knowledge; this is what comes out of the act of re-knowing existing knowledge. It would not be superfluous to underline that for education as the practice of liberation to be able to attempt to achieve the re-knowing of existing knowledge of what the obtaining of new knowledge reveals. it can never make its manner of 'dealing with' man's consciousness coincide with the manner in which dominating education 'deals with' it. Hence the necessity we referred to earlier of the educator who chooses the humanist option having a 'correct' awareness of the relations between consciousness and

world or between man and the world.

This is why the practice of education for liberation takes on itself to propose to men a sort of 'archaeology' of the consciousness. By making this effort they can in a sense again take the natural path from which the consciousness emerges able to perceive itself. In the process of 'hominisation' in which reflection begins can be seen 'the individual, instantaneous leap of instinct to Thought.'3 From this furthest-back moment, the reflective consciousness characterises man as an animal not just capable of knowing but also capable of knowing that he knows. Thus, when it emerges, the con-sciousness emerges as 'intentionality' and not as a recipient to be filled.

The critical perception of this fact destroys on the one hand the simplist dualism which establishes an imaginary dichotomy between consciousness and the world; on the other, it corrects the error into which the ingenuous consciousness falls when it is ideologised by the structures of domination, the error of considering itself to be the empty recipient which is to be filled with contests. It is for this reason that the more men are 'anaesthetised' in their power of reflection-this power is acquired in the process of their evolution. and serves basically to distinguish them from animals4—the more they find themselves hindered from really liberating themselves.5

It thus seems easy to understand, from the point of view of dehu-

³ Teilhard de Chardin: El Fenomeno humano. Taurus, Madrid, 1963 p. 218.

^{4.} Teilhard de Chardin: op. cit.

^{5.} We do not mean in saying this that the mere use of the capacity for reflection suffices to liberate. It is obvious that liberation requiries a transforming action on the objective reality in which men are oppressed, and even dehumanised. As there is no true reflection without action, and vice versa, they together constitute in the last analysis and without any possibility of dichotomy, the real praxis of man on the world, without which liberation is impossible.

manising ideology, why it is indispensable to avoid at all costs any act by which man can be aware of himself as a reflecting, acting being who also transforms the world. Indeed, it is in the interests of this ideology to put into operation a domesticating conception of the consciousness as an empty space which must be filled.

In their objectives, and in seeking to carry them out the power elites are confronted with an obstacle which they attempt to overcome, more efficiently each time, with the aid of the science and the techniques at their disposition. But as it is not possible for them to destroy or to make disappear men's capacity for thought, they mythify reality, and condition men to a false way of thinking about themselves and about the world.6

The mythification of reality consists in making it appear what it is not. This mythification necessarily implies the falsification of the consciousness. What would be impossible would be the falsification of reality, the reality of the consciousness, without the falsification of the consciousness of reality. One cannot exist without the other.

Just as the process of liberation involves this 'archaeology' of the consciousness through which, as we said before, man again takes the natural path from which the consciousness emerges able to perceive itself, in the process of domination mythification involves a different kind of 'archaeology', the 'archaeology' of 'irrationality'. However, this does not mean a return to a purely instinctive form of life, but rather a distortion of reason. The mythical element introduced into it does not precisely prevent man from thinking; it makes the exercising of his critical faculty difficult, at the same time in which it gives him the illusion that his

thinking is right. Propaganda is established as the efficient instrument for creating this illusion. Through this, not only are the 'excellences' of the social order praised, but it is made public that any attempt to investigate the social order is inherently 'an act of subversion, harmful to the common good.' Thus, mythification leads to the 'sacralisation' of the social order, which must not be touched, nor even discussed. All who attempt to do so have to be punished in one form or another,7 and are exposed—also by means of propaganda-as-'bad citizens in the service of international diabolism.' The 'sacralisation' of the domesti-cating social order is as necessary to its preservation as is critical 'openness' to the society which is engaged in a permanent search to humanise men. Of course, all attempt at mythification tends towards 'totalitarianism', that is to say, tends towards involvement in human affairs in all their dimensions. No field is safe from falsification, since any exception may find itself turned into a threat to the 'sacralisation' of the established order. This means that the school, whatever its level, finds itself playing a most important role, that of an instrument of social control. It is not uncommon to meet educators for whom 'educating is adapting the educatee to their medium', and indeed the school does nothing other.

In general, the good pupil is neither restive, nor indocile; he does not show doubt, he does not wish to know the reason for facts, he does not go beyond set models, he does not denounce 'mediocratising' bureaucracy, he does not refuse to be an object; the good pupil on the contrary is he who repeats, who refuses to think critically, who adapts to models, who 'finds it nice to be a rhinoceros.'8

The teacher who 'is divine' within the sacred and sacralising

school is almost always untouchable, not just in his mythified authority but even—quite logically—physically. The pupil cannot even make the affectionate gesture of putting his hand on his shoulder. This intimacy between mortals would threaten the distance which should necessarily exist between him and the educatees...The latter finally have nothing to do except receive the 'contents' which the educator transfers to them, impregnated with the ideology which is necessary for the interests of the 'sacralised' order.

What did you learn in school today, dear little boy of mine?

What did you learn in school today, dear little boy of mine?

- I learned that Washington never told a lie.
- I learned that soldiers seldom die.
- I learned that everybody's free,

And that's what the teacher said to me.

That's what I learned in school today,

That's what I learned in school.

- I learned that policemen are my friends,
- I learned that justice never ends.
- I learned that murderers die for their crimes.

Even if we make a mistake sometimes.

I learned our government must be strong,

It's always right and never wrong,

Our leaders are the finest men,

And we elect them again and again.

What did you learn in school today, dear little boy of mine?

What did you learn in school today, dear little boy of mine?

- I learned that war is not so bad,
- I learned about the great ones

For this see Paulo Freire: Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Herder and Herder, New York, 1970.

Levels of punishment vary in proportion of those who refuse to adapt to the "bovinisation" imposed by the oppressing order.

^{8.} See IONESCO: Rhinoceros

we have had.

We've fought in Germany and France,

And someday I may get my chance.

That's what I learned in school today,

That's what I learned in school.9

This could be more or less the song that millions of children from different parts of the world might sing if we asked them what they learned in school today.

If our curiosity led us to ask our young people what they learned in the university today, their reply would not be dramatically less impressive than that of the little boy in Tom Paxton's song. Among other things they might say:

Today we learned in the university that the objectivity of science implies the neutrality of the scientist; we learned today that knowledge is pure, universal and unconditioned, and that the university is the seat of this knowledge.

We learned today—although not verbally—that the world is divided between those who know and those who do not know—that is to say, those who work, and that the university is the home of the former.

Today we learned that the university is the temple of chaste knowledge, and must live above terrestrial preoccupations like the liberation of men.

Today we learned that reality is a given fact, that it is what it is and that our scientific impartiality allows us to describe it as it is. In order to describe it as it is, we have no need to seek more important reasons explaining how it is. Today we learned in the university that if we manage to denounce it as it is at present in order to announce

its new form of being, we are no longer scientists but ideologues...

Today we learned that economic development is a purely technical problem; that underdeveloped peoples are inefficient—sometimes because of race-mixtures, sometimes for climatic reasons, and sometimes just by nature.

Today we were informed that negroes learn less than whites because they are intellectually inferior, even though they also show certain unquestionable abilities, such as being able to run, to use their hands, and to stand up to the most exacting physical work.

What is unquestionable is that the end-result of all this mythification, whether it comes through school or not, is to obstruct men's critical capacity in favour of preserving the status quo. The imposition of these myths, as of so many others, explains forms of action inconsistent with the options announced by many.

They speak of respect for the human person, and the 'human person' is compressed into a banal phrase; then they fail to recognise the real men who are dominated and 'thingified'.

They say that they are committed to liberation and then act on myths which deny the humanisation of man.

They analyse the social mechanisms of repression, but at the same time, and using equally repressive methods, they hold down the students to whom they speak.

They call themselves revolutionaries, but at the same time do not believe in the people they claim to lead to liberation—as if this were not a glaring contradiction.

They desire the humanisation of men, and at the same time desire to preserve the social reality in which men are dehumanised.

At heart, they are afraid of liberty. With this fear, they cannot take the risk of establishing liberty through communion with those who live deprived of it.

²⁴

Breakdown of schools

IVAN ILLICH

SCHOOLS are in crisis and so are the people who attend them. The former is a crisis in a political institution; the latter is a crisis of political attitudes. This second crisis, the crisis of personal growth, can be dealt with only if understood as distinct from, though related to, the crisis of school.

Schools have lost their unquestioned claim to educational legitimacy. Most of their critics still demand a painful and radical reform of the school, but a quickly expanding minority will not stand for anything short of the prohibition of compulsory attendance and the disqualification of academic certificates. Controversy between partisans of renewal and partisans of disestablishment will soon come to a head.

The breakdown of schools, since it affects all members of the society, will become a fascinating and consuming preoccupation of the public forum. As attention focuses on the school, however, we can be easily distracted from a much deeper concern: the manner in which learning will be viewed in a deschooled society. Will people continue to treat learning as a commodity—a commodity which could be more efficiently produced and consumed by greater numbers of people if new institutional arrangements were established? Or shall we set up only those institutional arrangements which protect the autonomy of the learner—his private initiative to decide what he will learn and his inalienable right to learn what he likes rather than what is useful to somebody else? We must choose between more efficient education of people fit for an increasingly efficient societyand a new society in which education ceases to be the task of some special agency.

All over the world schools are organized enterprises designed to reproduce the established order, whether this order is called revolutionary, conservative or evolutio-Everywhere the loss of narv. pedagogical credibility and the resistance to schools provides a fundamental option: shall this crisis be dealt with as a problem which can and must be solved by substituting new devices for school and readjusting the existing power structure to fit these devices? Or shall this crisis force a society to face the structural contradictions inherent in the politics and economics of any society which reproduces itself through the industrial process.

The problem-solving approach to de-schooling could serve as a means to tighten the alliance between the military, the industrial sector, and the 'therapeutic' service industries. De-schooling, as a merely administrative programme, could be the accommodation which would permit the present political structure to survive into the era of late 20th century technology. On the other hand, the crisis of school could be understood as a breakdown of the most important. respected, non-controversial sector of society, the branch which employs 60 of the 140 million fulltime institutionally active Americans as either pupils or teachers.

In the U.S. and Canada, huge investments in schooling only serve to make institutional contradictions more evident. Experts warn us: Charles Silberman's report to the Carnegie Commission, published as Crisis In the Classroom, has become a bestseller. It appeals to a large public because of its well documented indictment of the system-in the light of which his attempts to save the school by manicuring its most obvious faults palls to insignificance. The Wright Commission in Ontario had to report to its government sponsors that post-secondary education is inevitably and without remedy taxing the poor disproportionately for an education which will always be enjoyed mainly by the rich.

Experience confirms these warnings: Students and teachers drop out; free schools come and go. Political control of schools replaces

bond issues on the platforms of school board candidates and—as recently happened in Berkeley—advocates of grassroots control are elected to the board.

On March 8, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger delivered the unanimous opinion of the court in the case of Griggs et al vs. Duke Power Co. Interpreting the intent of Congress in the equal opportunities section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Burger Court ruled that any school degree or any test given prospective employees must 'measure the man for the job' and not the 'man in the abstract'. The burden for proving that educational requirements are a 'reasonable measure of job performance' rests with the employer. In this decision, the court ruled only on the use of tests and diplomas as means of racial discrimination, but the logic of the Chief Justice's argument applies to any use of educational pedigree as a prerequisite for employment. The Great Training Robbery' so effectively exposed by Ivar Berg must now face challenge from a congeries of pupils, employers and taxpayers.

In poor countries schools rationalize economic lag. The majority of citizens are excluded from the scarce modern means of production and consumption, but long to enter the economy by way of the school door. The legitimization of hierarchical distribution of privilege and power has shifted from lineage, inheritance, the favour of king or pope, and ruthlessness on the market or on the battlefield to a more subtle form of capitalism: the hierarchical but liberal institution of compulsory schooling which permits the well-schooled to impute to the lagging consumer of knowledge the guilt for holding a certificate of lower denomination. Yet this rationalization of inequality can never square with the facts, and populist regimes find it increasingly difficult to hide the conflict between rhetoric and reality.

Upon seizing power, the military junta in Peru immediately decided to suspend further expenditures on free public school. They reasoned that since a third of the public budget could not provide one full year of decent schooling for all, the available tax receipts could better be spent on a type of educational resources which make them more nearly accessable to all citizens. The educational reform commission appointed by the junta could not fully carry out this decision because of pressures from the school teachers of the APRA, the Communists, and the Cardinal Archbishop of Lima. Now there will be two competing systems of public education in a country which cannot afford one. The resulting contradictions will confirm the original judgement of the junta.

F or ten years Castro's Cuba has devoted great energies to rapid-growth popular education, relying on available manpower, without the usual respect for professional credentials. The initial spectacular successes of this campaign, especially in diminishing illiteracy, have been cited as evidence for the claim that the slow growth rate of other Latin American school systems is due to corruption, militarism and a capitalist market economy.

Yet, now, the hidden curriculum of hierarchical schooling is catching up to Fidel and his attempt to school-produce the New Man. Even when students spend half the year in the cane fields and fully subscribe to fidelismo, the school trains every year a crop of knowledge consumers ready to move on to new levels of consumption:

Also, Dr. Castro faces evidence that the school system will never turn out enough certified technical manpower. Those licensed graduates who do get the new jobs destroy, by their conservatism, the results obtained by non-certified cadres who muddled into their positions through on-the-job training. Teachers just cannot be blamed for the failures of a revolutionary government which insists on the institutional capitalization of manpower through a hidden curriculum guaranteed to produce a universal bourgeoisie.

This crisis is epochal. We are witnessing the end of the age of

schooling. School has lost the power, which reigned supreme during the first half of this century, to blind its participants to the divergence between the egalitarian myth which its rhetoric serves and the rationalization of a stratified society which its certificates pro-The current collapse of schools is a sign of disaffection with the industrial mode of production. The dropout manifests consumer resistance, which rises faster in the service industry than in the market for manufactured goods. The loss of legitimacy of the schooling process as a means of determining competence, as a measure of social value, and as an agent of equality threatens all political systems which rely on schools as the means of reproducing themselves.

School is the initiation ritual to a society which is oriented towards the progressive consumption of increasingly less tangible and more expensive services; a society which relies on worldwide standards; large-scale and long-term planning; constant obsolescence through the in-built ethos of never-ending improvements: the constant translation of new needs into specific demands for the consumption of new satisfactions. This society is proving itself unworkable.

Since the crisis in schooling is symptomatic of a deeper crisis of modern industrial society, it is important that the critics of schooling avoid superficial solutions. Inadequate analysis of the nature of schooling only postpones the facing of deeper issues. Worse still, superficial reforms can ease present tensions, only to promote a smooth transition from antiquated industrial forms to a post-industrial society which would lack even the saving graces of the present system.

M ost school-criticism is pedagogical, political, or technological. The criticism of the educator is leveled at what is taught and how it is taught. The curriculum is outdated, so we have courses on African culture, on North American imperialism, on Women's liberation, on food and nutrition.

Passive learning is old-fashioned, so we have increased student participation, both in the classroom and in the planning of curriculum. School buildings are ugly, so we have new learning environments. There is concern for the development of human sensitivity, so group therapy methods are imported into the classroom.

Another important set of critics is involved with the politics of urban school administration. They feel that the poor could run their schools better than a centralized bureaucracy which is oblivious to the problems of the dispossessed. Black parents are enlisted to replace white teachers in the motivation of their children to make time and find the will to learn.

Still other critics emphasize that schools make inefficient use of modern technology. They would either electrify the classroom or replace schools with computerized learning centers. If they follow McLuhan, they would replace blackboards and textbooks with multi-media happenings, if they follow Skinner, they would compete with the classical teacher and sell economy packages of measurable behavioral modifications to cost-conscious schoolboards.

The pedagogical, the political and the technological critics of the school system do not call the institution itself into question. Nor do they recognize the most important effects of schooling.

believe that all these critics miss the point, because they fail to attend to what I have elsewhere called the ritual aspects of schooling—what I here propose to call the hidden curriculum, the structure underlying what has been called the certification Others have used this phrase to refer to the environmental curriculum of the ghetto street or the suburban lawn, which the teacher's curriculum either reinforces or vainly attempts to replace. I am using the term hidden curriculum to refer to the structure of schooling as opposed to what happens in school, in the same way that linguists distinguish between the structure of a language and the use which the speaker makes of it.

The traditional hidden curriculum of school demands that people of a certain age assemble in groups of about thirty under the authority of a professional teacher for from 500 to a thousand times a year. It does not matter if the teacher is authoritarian so long as it is the teacher's authority that counts; it does not matter if all meetings occur in the same place so long as they are somehow understood as attendance. hidden curriculum of school requires—whether by law or by fact—that a citizen accumulate a minimum quantum of school years in order to obtain his civil rights.

The hidden curriculum of school has been legislated in all the united nations from Afghanistan to Zambia. It is common to the United States and the Soviet Union, to rich nations and poor, to electoral and dictatorial regimes. Whatever ideologies and techniques are explicitly transmitted in their school systems, all these nations assume that political and economic development depend on further investment in schooling.

The hidden curriculum teaches children that economically valuable knowledge is the result of professional teaching and that social entitlements depend on the rank achieved in a bureaucratic process. The hidden curriculum transforms the explicit curriculum into a commodity and makes its acquisition the securest form of wealth. Knowledge certificatesunlike property rights, corporate stock or family inheritance—are free from challenge. They withstand sudden changes of fortune. They convert into guaranteed privilege. That high accumulation of knowledge should convert to high personal consumption might be challenged in North Vietnam or Cuba, but school is universally accepted as the avenue to greater power, to increased legitimacy as a producer and to further learning resources.

For all its vices school cannot be simply and rashly eliminated:

certain important negative func-The hidden curriculum, tions. unconsciously accepted by the liberal pedagogues, frustrates his conscious liberal aims, because it is inherently inconsistent with them. But, on the other hand, it also prevents the takeover of education by the programmed instruction of behavioural technologists. While the hidden curriculum makes social role depend on the process of acquiring knowledge, thus legitimizing stratification, it also ties the learning process to full-time attendance, thus illegitimizing the educational entrepeneur. If the school continues to lose its educational and political legitimacy, while knowledge is still conceived as a commodity, we will certainly face the emergence of a therapeutic Big Brother.

The translation of the need for learning into the demand for schooling and the conversion of the quality of growing up into the price tag of a professional treatment changes the meaning of 'knowledge' from a term which designates intimacy, intercourse and life experience into one which designates professionally packaged products, marketable entitlements and abstract values. Schools have fostered this translation; they might not be its most effective agents. The new media people might be able to distribute knowledge package more rationally, more efficiently and more intimately: many of them would like nothing better than to eliminate school administrators out of touch with the latest technology.

Personal knowledge is unpredictable and surprising with respect to both occurrence and outcome. whereas official knowledge must be anticipated and directed to measurable goals. Personal knowledge is always incomplete, because there are always further questions to be asked. Official knowledge is always unfinished, because there are always newer packages to con-The progress of personal sume. knowledge is governed by intrinsic rules of inquiry. The acquisition

in the present situation it performs of official knowledge is measured by compliance with extrinsic rules of attendance. Personal knowledge is confident even while incomplete because it obeys its own restlessness. Official knowledge rests uneasy because its current value depends on institutional acceptance. Official knowledge only can solve puzzles within the present framework—only personal knowledge can lead to investigation which aims at change.

> Schools are by no means the only institutions which pretend to translate knowledge, understanding and wisdom into behavioural traits, the measurement of which is the key to prestige and power. Nor are schools the first institution used to convert knowledge to power. The Chinese mandarin system, for example, was for centuries a stable and effective educational system in the service of a class whose privilege depended on the acquisition of official knowledge. About 2200 B.C. the emperor of China is said to have examined his officials every third year. After three examinations he either promoted them, or dismissed them forever from the service.

> A thousand years later, in 1115, the first Chan emperor established formal general tests for office: archery, horsemanship, writing and arithmetic. One in every hundred who presented himself for competition with his peers -and not for competition against some abstract standard—was promoted through the three degrees of 'budding geniuses', 'promoted and those who were scholars' 'Ready for Office'. The selection ratio of the exams to three successive levels were so small, that the tests themselves would not have had to be very valid in order to be useful. Promotion to a scholarly rank did not provide entitlement to any of the coveted jobs: it provided a ticket for a public lottery at which offices were distributed by lot among the mandarins.

> No schools, much less universities, developed in China until she had to begin waging war with European powers. Voltaire and

many of his contemporaries praised the Chinese system of promotion through learning acquired. The first civil service examinations in Europe and the U.S. used the Chinese system, directly or indirectly, as a model. Civil Service testing was introduced by the revolution in 1791 in France, only to be abolished by Napoleon. The English Civil Service system began as a selection for service in India by men familiar with the Chinese system. Congressman Thomas Jenckes, one of the fathers of the U.S. Civil Service, sold his programme to Congress in 1868 by praising the Chinese system.

For a while, public schools parlayed the consumption of knowledge into the exercise of privilege and power in a society where this function coincided with the legitimate aspirations of those members of the lower middle classes for whom schools provided access to the classical professions. Now that the discriminatory effects of the use of schooling for social screening become more apparent, a new mandarin system becomes an appealing alternative to many people.

Christopher Jencks, misread byuncritical followers, could easily turn 'tuition vouchers' into identification tags of the new mandarins. It becomes equally tempting to use modern techniques for seducing individuals to the self-motivated acquisition of packaged learning. This can be done without the protection of schools in a society already trained to conceive of valuable learning as a commodity. rather than as an act of total participation by an individual in his culture.

Since the nineteenth century, we have become accustomed to the claim that man in a capitalist economy is alienated from his labour: that he cannot enjoy it, and that he is exploited of its fruits by those who own the tools of production. Most countries which appeal to Marxist ideology have had only limited success in changing this exploitation, and then usually by shifting its benefits from the owners to the New Class and from

the living generation to the members of the future nation state.

Socialist failures can be explained away by ascribing them to bad readings of Marx and Engels or to inadequacies of the original theory. Then again, blame can be transferred to war, blockade or invasion. Or it can be interpreted in terms of inherited sociological conditions, such as a particular type of rural-urban balance. Whatever the argument, however, Marxist orthodoxies and revisionist heresies and value-free rebuttals now put up smoke-screens against independent analysis.

The concept of alienation cannot help us understand the present crisis unless it is applied not only to the purposeful and productive use of human endeavour. but also to the use made of men as the recipients of professional treatments. Language reflects this alienation when it translates these verbs into substantives, which make it possible to say that 'I have' leisure. learning...transportation, rather than that I do' enjoy, learn, move, or communicate. An expanded understanding of alienation would enable us to see that in a service-centered economy man is estranged from what he can 'do' as well as from what he can 'make', that he has delivered his mind and heart over to therapeutic treatment even more completely than he has sold away the fruits of his labour.

Schools have alienated man from his learning. He does not enjoy going to school; if he is poor he does not get the reputed benefits; if he does all that is asked of him, he finds his security constantly threatened by more recent graduates; if he is sensitive, he feels deep conflicts between what is and what is supposed to be. He does not trust his own judgment and even if he resents the judgment of the educator, he is condemned to accept it and to believe himself that he cannot change reality.

The mutation of the concept of revolution cannot occur, however, without a rejection of the hidden curriculum of schooling and the

correlative attitude toward knowledge, for it is this curriculum and this attitude which turns out disciplined consumers of bureaucratic instructions ready to consume other kinds of services and treatments which they are told are good for them. The converging crisis of ritual schooling and of acquisitive knowledge raises the deeper issue of the tolerability of life in an alienated society. If we formulate principles for alternative institutional arrangements and an alternative emphasis in the conception of learning, we will also be suggesting principles for a radically alternative political economic organization.

Just as the structure of one's native language can be grasped only after he has begun to feel at ease in another tongue, so the fact that the hidden curriculum of schooling has moved out of the blindspot of social analysis indicates that alternative forms of social initiation are beginning to emerge and are permitting some of us to see things from a new perspective. Today, it is relatively easy to get wide agreement on the fact that gratuitous, compulsory schooling is contrary to the political self-interest of an enlightened majority. School has become pedagogically indefensible as an instrument of universal education. It no longer fits the needs of the seductive salesmen of programmed learning. Proponents of recorded, filmed and computerized instruction used to court the schoolmen as business prospects; now they are itching to do the job on their own.

As more and more of the sectors of society become dissatisfied with school and conscious of its hidden curriculum, increasingly large concessions are made to translate their demands into needs which can be served by the system—and which thus can disarm their dissent. I here describe some of these attempts under the general label of 'cooptation'.

As the hidden curriculum moves out of the darkness and into the twilight of our awareness, phrases such as the 'deschooling of society': and the 'disestablishment of schools' become instant slogans. I do not think these phrases were used before last year. This year they have become, in some circles, the badge and criterion of the new orthodoxy.

Recently I talked by amplified telephone to students in a seminar on deschooling at the Ohio State University College of Education. Everett Reimer's book on deschooling has become a popular college text, even before it is commercially published. Unless the radical critics of school are not only ready to embrace the deschooling slogan but also prepared to reject the current view that learning and growing up can be adequately explained as a process of programming, and the current vision of social justice based on it—more obligatory consumption for everybody—we may face the charge of having provoked the last of the missed revolutions.

The current crisis has made it easy to attack schools. Schools, after all, are authoritarian and rigid; they do produce both conformity and conflict; they do discriminate against the poor and disengage the privileged. These are not new facts, but it used to be a mark of some boldness to point them out. Now it takes a good deal of courage to defend schools. It has become fashionable to poke fun at alma mater, to take a potshot at the former sacred cow.

Once the vulnerability of schools has been exposed, it also becomes easy to suggest remedies for the most outrageous abuses. The authoritarian rule of the classroom is not intrinsic to the notion of an extended confinement of children in schools. Free schools are practical alternatives; they can often be run more cheaply than ordinary schools. Since accountability already belongs to educational rhetoric, community control and performance contracting have become attractive and respectable political goals. Everyone wants education to be relevant to real life, so critics talk freely about pushing back the classroom walls

to the borders of our culture. Not only are alternatives more widely advocated, they are often at least partially implemented; experimental schools are financed by school boards: the hiring of certified teachers is decentralized; high school credit is given for apprenticeship and college credit for travel; computer games are given a trial run.

Most of the changes have some good effects. The experimental schools have fewer truants; parents have a greater feeling of participation in the decentralized districts; children who have been introduced to real jobs do turn out more competent.

Y et, all these alternatives operate within predictable limits, since they leave the hidden structure of schools intact. Free schools which lead to further free schools in an unbroken chain of attendance produce the mirage of freedom. Attendance as the result of seduction inculcates the need for specialized treatment more persuasively than reluctant attendance enforced by truant officers. Free school graduates are easily rendered impotent for life in a society which bears little resemblance to the protected gardens in which they have been cultivated. Community control of the lower levels of a system turns local school board members into pimps for the professional hookers who control the upper levels.

Learning by doing is not worth much if doing has to be defined as socially valuable learning by professional educators or by law. The global village will be a global schoolhouse if teachers hold all the plugs. It would be distinguishable in name only from a global madhouse run by social therapists or a global prison run by corporation wardens.

In a general way I have pointed out the dangers of a rash, uncritical disestablishment of school. More concretely, these dangers are exemplified by various kinds of cooption which change the hidden curriculum without changing the basic concept of learning and of knowledge and their relation-

ship to the freedom of the individual in society.

The rash and uncritical disestablishment of school could lead to a free-for-all in the production and consumption of more vulgar learning, acquired for immediate utility or eventual prestige. The discrediting of school-produced complex curricular packages would be an empty victory if there were no simultaneous disavowal of the very idea that knowledge is more valuable because it comes in certified packages and is acquired from some mythological knowledgestock controlled by professional guardians.

I believe that only actual participation constitutes socially valuable learning, a participation by the learner in every stage of the learning process, including not only a free choice of what is to be learned and how it is to be learned, but also a free determination by each learner of his own reason for living and learning—the part that his knowledge is to play in his life.

Social control in an apparently deschooled society could be more subtle and more numbing than in the present society, where many people at least experience a feeling of release on the last day of school. More intimate forms of manipulation are already common, as the amount learned through the media exceeds the amount learned through personal contact in and out of school. Learning from programmed information always hides reality behind a screen.

Let me illustrate the paralyzing effects of programmed information by a perhaps shocking example. The tolerance of the American people to United States atrocities in Vietnam is much higher than the tolerance of the German people to German atrocities on the front, in occupied territories and in extermination camps during the Second World War.

It was a political crime for Germans to discuss the atrocities committed by Germans. The presentation of U.S. atrocities on network television is considered an

educational service. Certainly the population of the United States is much better informed about the crimes committed by its troops in a colonial war than were the Germans about the crimes committed by its SS within the territory of the Reich. To get information on atrocities in Germany meant that you had to take a great risk; in the U.S. the same information is channelled into your living room.

This does not mean, however, that the Germans were any less aware that their government was engaged in cruel and massive crime than are the contemporary Americans. In fact, it can be argued that the Germans were more aware, precisely because they were not psychically overwhelmed with packaged information about killing and torture, because they were not drugged into accepting that evertyhing is possible, because thev were not vaccinated against reality by having it fed to them as decomposed 'bits' on a screen.

The consumer of pre-cooked knowledge learns to react to knowledge he has acquired rather than to the reality from which a team of experts have abstracted it. If access to reality is always controlled by a therapist and if the learner accepts this control as natural. his entire world-view becomes hygienic and neutral: he becomes politically impotent. He becomes impotent to know in the sense of the Hebrew word 'jdh' which means intercourse penetrating the nakedness of being and reality. Because reality for which he can accept responsibility is hidden for him under the scales of assorted information he has accumulated.

The uncritical disestablishment of school could also lead to new performance criteria for preferential employment and promotion and most importantly for privileged access to tools. Our present scale of 'general' ability, competence and trustworthiness for role assignment is calibrated by tolerance to high doses of schooling. It is established by teachers, and accepted by many as rational and benevolent. New devices could be

developed, and new rationals found, both more insidious than school grading and equally effective to justify social stratification and the accumulation of privilege and power.

Participation in military, bureaucratic or political activities or status in a party could provide a pedigree just as transferable to other institutions as the pedigree of grandparents in an aristocratic society, standing within the Church in medieval society or age at graduation in a schooled society. General tests of attitudes, intelligence or mechanical ability could be standardized according to other criteria than those of the schoolmaster. They could reflect the ideal levels of professional treatment espoused by psychiatrist, ideologue or bureaucrat.

Academic criteria are already suspect. The Center for Urban Studies of Columbia University has shown that there is less correlation between specialized education and job performance in specialized fields than there is between specialized education and the resulting income, prestige and administrative power.

Non-academic criteria are already proposed. From the urban ghetto in the United States to the villages of China, revolutionary groups try to prove that ideology and militancy are types of 'learning' which convert more suitably into political and economic power than scholastic curricula. Unless we guarantee that job-relevance is the only acceptable criterion for employment, promotion, or access to tools, thus ruling out not only schools but all other ritual screening, then deschooling means driving out the devil with Beelzebub.

The search for a radical alternative to the school system itself will be of little avail unless it finds expression in precise political demands: the demand for the disestablishment of school in the broadest sense and the correlative guarantee of freedom for education. This means legal protections, a political programme and principles for the construction of insti-

tutional arrangements which are the inverse of school.

Schools cannot be disestablished without the total prohibition of legislated attendance; the proscription of any discrimination on the basis of prior attendance and the transfer of control over tax funds from benevolent institutions to the individual person. Even these actions, however, do not guarantee freedom of education unless they are accompanied by the positive recognition of each person's independence in the face of school and of any other device designed to compel specific behavioural change or to measure man in the abstract rather than to measure man for a concrete job.

Deschooling makes strange bedfellows. The ambiguity inherent in the breakdown of schooling is manifested by the unholy alliance of groups which can identify their vested interests with the disestablishment of school: students, teachers, employers, opportunistic taxpavers. Supreme Court justices. But this alliance becomes unholy, and this bedfellowship more than strange if it is based only on the recognition that schools are inefficient tools for the production and consumption of education, and some other form of mutual exploitation would be more satisfactory.

The insurmountable problems of inefficiency, consumer resistance and political scandal which the school system can no longer hide, could be solved by more rational, attractive and specific learning packages, the diversification of educational procedures and cloud-like dispersal of production centres. A new educational lobby could even now be organized on behalf of more effective training for jobs and social roles, more iob-related measurements more benevolently cooperative ac-The hidden curricuculturation. could of schooling transmuted into the unseen mask of a therapeutic culture.

We can disestablish schools or we can deschool culture. We can resolve provisionally some of the administrative problems of the knowledge industry or we can spell out the goals of political revolution in terms of educational postulates. The acid test of our response to the present crisis is our pinpointing of the responsibility for teaching and learning.

Schools have made teachers into administrators of programmes of manpower capitalization through directed planned behavioural changes. In a schooled society, the ministrations of professional teachers become a first necessity which hooks pupils into unending consumption and dependence. Schools have made 'learning' a specialized activity. Deschooling will only be a displacement of responsibility to other kinds of administration so long as teaching and learning remain sacred activities separate and estranged from fulfilling life. schools were disestablished for the purpose of more efficient delivery of 'knowledge' to more people, the alienation of men through client-relationships with the new knowledge industry would only become global.

Deschooling must be the secularisation of teaching and learning. It must involve a return of control over what is learned and how it is learned to persons, and not a transfer of control to another, a more amorphous set of institutions, and its perhaps less obvious representatives. The learner must be guaranteed his freedom without guaranteeing to society what learning he will acquire and hold as his own. Each man must be guaranteed privacy in learning, with the hope that he will assume the obligation of helping others to grow into uniqueness.

Whoever takes the risk of teaching others must assume responsibility for the results, as must the student who exposes himself to the influence of a teacher; neither should shift guilt to sheltering institutions or laws. A schooled society must reassert the joy of conscious living over the capitalization of manpower.

The touchstone of mutation in education is the honest recognition

that most people learn most of the time when they do what they enjoy doing. Most people are capable of personal, intimate intercourse with others unless they are stupefied by inhuman work or snowed under by treatment with programmes. Once this is admitted, we will understand that to increase learning opportunities means to facilitate communication between the learner and his world, between the learner and his fellows, between the learner and those who can point him towards traditions and methods tested by their experience.

Once we take hold of the simple insight that personal knowledge is always unpredictable but never unconnected, we will undertake the real task of setting up institutional arrangements which guarantee the freedom necessary for independent inquiry. We will multiply the roads, bridges, and windows to learning opportunities and make sure that they are opened at the learner's bidding.

Any dialogue about knowledge is really a dialogue about the individual in society. An analysis of the present crisis of school leads us, then, to talk about the social structure necessary to facilitate learning, to encourage independence and interrelationship and to overcome alienation. This kind of discourse is outside the usual range of educational concern. It leads, in fact, to the enunciation of specific political goals. These goals can be most sharply defined by distinguishing three general types of 'intercourse' in which a person must engage if he would grow up.

Get at the facts, get access to the tools, and bear the responsibility for the limits within which either can be used. If a person is to grow up, he needs, in the first place, access to things, places, processes, events and records. To guarantee such access is primarily a matter of unlocking the privileged storerooms to which they are presently consigned.

The poor child and the rich child are different partly because what is a secret for one is patent

to the other. By turning knowledge into a commodity, we have learned to deal with it as with private property. The principle of private property is now used as the major rationale for declaring certain facts off-limits to people without the proper pedigree. The first goal of a political programme aimed at rendering the world educational is the abolition of the right to reserve access necessary for the purpose of teaching or learning. The right of private preserve is now claimed by individuals, but it is most effectively exercised and protected by corporations, bureaucracies and nation states. In fact, the abolition of this right is not consistent with the continuation of either the political or the professional structure of any modern nation.

The end of property protection would mean the abolition of most professional secrets and the consequent removal of the rationale for professional exploitation. means more than merely improving the distribution of teaching materials or providing financial entitlements for the purchase of educational objects. The abolition of secrets clearly transcends conventional proposals for educational reform, yet it is precisely from an educational point of view that the necessity of stating this broadand perhaps unattainable—political goal is most clearly seen.

The learner also needs access to persons who can teach him the tricks of their trades or the rudiments of their skills. For the interested learner, it does not take much time to learn how to perform most skills or to play most roles. The best teacher of a skill is usually someone who is engaged in its useful exercise. We tend to forget these things in a society where professional teachers monopolize intiation into all fields, and disqualify unauthorized teaching in the community. An important political goal, then, is to provide incentives for the sharing of acquired skills.

The demand that skills be shared implies, of course, a much more radical vision of a desirable future.

Access to skills is not only restricted by the monopoly of schools and unions over licensing. There is also the fact that the exercise of skills is tied to the use of scarce Scientific knowledge is tools. overwhelmingly incorporated into tools which are highly specialized and which must be used within complex structures set up for the 'efficient' production of goods and services for which demand becomes general while supply remains scarce. Only a privileged few get the results of sophisticated medical research, and only a privileged few get to be doctors. A relatively small minority will travel on supersonic airplanes and only a few pilots will know how to fly

The simplest way to state the alternatives to this trend toward specialization of needs and their satisfaction is in educational terms. It is a question of the desirable use of scientific knowledge. In order to facilitate more equal access to the benefits of science and to decrease alienation and unemployment, we must favour the incorporation of scientific knowledge into tools or components within the reach of a great majority of people. These tools would allow most people to develop their skills. Any peasant girl could learn how to diagnose and treat almost all the infections which occur in rural Mexico if she were introduced to the use of techniques which are now available but which were undreamt of by the doctor of a couple of generations ago. In poor countries most people still build their own houses, often using mud or the covering of oil barrels. Now, we want to give them low-cost, pre-packaged housing—thus 'modernizing' them into regarding housing as a commodity rather than an activity. We would better provide them with cement mixers.

Certainly the tools used in learning—and in most scientific research—have become so cheap that they could be made available to anyone: books, audio and video tapes and the simple scientific instruments in whose use is learned those basic skills which

form the basis for the supposedly advanced skill required of the very few who might have to operate an electron-microscope.

Insight into the conditions necessary for wider acquisition and use of skills permits us to define a fundamental characteristic of postindustrial socialism. It is of no use-indeed it is fraudulent-to promote public ownership of the tools of production in an industrial, bureaucratic society. Factories, highways, heavy-duty trucks (...) can be symbolically 'owned' by all the people, as the Gross National Product and the Gross National Education are pursued in their name. But the specialized means of producing scarce goods and services cannot be used by the majority of people. Only tools which are cheap and simple enough to be accessible and usable by all people, tools which permit temporary association of those who want to use them for a specific occasion, tools which allow specific goals to emerge during their use—only such tools foster the recuperation of work and leisure now alienated through an industrial mode of production.

The development and wide dispersal of simple and durable tools would discredit the special privileges now given to technocrats. The growth of science would not be jeopardized but the progress of complex scientific technology at the service of technocratic privilege would become scandalous. This style of progres is now justified in the name of developing a necessary 'infrastructure'. A new style of research would reveal this infrastructure as the foundation of privilege.

To recognize, from an educational point of view, the priority of guaranteeing access to tools and components whose simplicity and durability permits their use in a wide variety of creative enterprises, is to simultaneously indicate the solution to the problem of unemployment. In an industrial society, unemployment is experienced as the sad inactivity of a man for whom there is nothing to make, while he has unlearned what to do. Since there is little

really useful work, the problem is usually 'solved' by creating more jobs in service industries like the military, public administration, education or social work.

Educational consideration oblige us to recommend the substitution of the present mode of industrial production which depends on a growing market for increasingly complex and obsolescent goods, by a mode of post-industrial production which depends on the demand for tools or components which are labour-intensive, repair-intensive, and whose complexity is strictly limited.

Science will be kept artificially arcane as long as its results are incorporated into technology at the service of professionals. If it were used to render possible a style of life in which each man can enjoy housing himself, healing himself, educating, moving and entertaining himself, then scientists would try much harder to re-translate the discoveries made in a secret language into the normal language of everyday life.

The level of education in any society can be gauged by the degree of effective access each of the members has to the facts and tools which—within this society affect his life. We have seen that such access requires a radical denial of the right to secrecy of facts and complexity of tools on which contemporary technocracies found their privilege, which they, in turn, render immune by interpreting its use as a service to the majority. A satisfactory level of education in a technological society imposes important constraints on the use to which scientific knowledge is put. In fact, a technological society which provides conditions for men to recuperate personally (and not institutionally) the sense of potency to learn and to produce which gives meaning to life, depends on restrictions which must be imposed on the technocrat who now controls both services and manufacture. Only an enlightened and powerful majority can impose such constraints.

If access to facts and use of tools constitute the two most obvious

freedoms needed to provide educational opportunity, the ability to convoke peers to a meeting constitute the one through which the learning by an individual is translated into political process—and political process in turn becomes conscious personal growth. Data and skills which an individual might have acquired shape into exploratory, creative, open-ended and personal meaning only when they are used in dialectic encounter. And this requires the guaranteed freedom for every individual to state, each day, the class of issue which he wants to discuss, the class of creative use of a skill in which he seeks a match—to make this bid known—and, within reason, to find the circumstances to meet with peers who join his class.

The right of free speech, free press, and free assembly traditionally meant this freedom. Modern electronics, photo-offset, and computer techniques in principle have provided the hardware which can provide this freedom with a range undreamt of in the century of enlightenment. Unfortunately the scientific knowhow has been used mainly to increase the power and decrease the number of funnels through which the bureaucrats of education, politics and information channel their quickfrozen TV dinners. But the same technology could be used to make peer-matching, meeting and printing as available as is now the private conversation over the telephone.

On the other hand, it should be clear that only through the definition of what constitutes a desirable society arrived at in the meeting of those who are both dispossessed and also disabused of the dream that constantly increasing quanta of consumption can provide them with the joy they seek out of life—can the inversion of institutional arrangement here drafted be put into effect—and also with it, a technological society which values occupation, intensive work, and leisure over alienation through goods and services.

An interview

KISH SAINT

IVAN ILLICH has been called 'an ultimate figure' and 'the Christian as rebel'. Whatever the appelation, he remains enigmatic. Every Friday, an hour before noon, a crowd of admirers, friends, detractors including students, clergymen, teachers, social workers, from Europe and the Americas, gathers on wooden benches in the gardens of the colonial villa that houses the Center for Intercultural Documentation founded by him. He walks in with brisk, nervous movement. Glancing around as if searching for an elusive thought, Illich takes up an unlikely cross-legged position on a small table and proceeds to engage his audience in a Socratic dialogue. The topic may be the school systems around the world, the verities of modern technological life or the wastefulness of contemporary medical training. It reflects a sense of deep outrage against western man's imposition of his uni-directional value system on the rest of mankind.

Born and educated in Vienna, Ivan Illich was ordained as a priest in Rome where he specialized in the high, inner sanctum politics of the Catholic Church. In the early fifties he worked as a parish priest in the Puerto Rican community in New York. Later he spent five years as the Vice-Chancellor of the Catholic University in Puerto Rico. He quit after his criticism of the Church's intervention in the election campaign of the Governor on the issue of birth control.

In 1961, Illich came to Mexico and founded CIDOC, a research and publication center for the documentation of vital trends in Latin American affairs. CIDOC provided language and orientation programmes for clergy and nuns from the United States and Europe on their way to Latin America.

The early sixties was an era of massive expansion of Church activities in Latin America supported by private business interests in Europe and the United States. Illich was quick to see the 'seamy side' of 'this charity'. 'We stumblingly recognize the perversity of our power politics and the destructive direction of our warped efforts to impose unilaterally "our way of life" on all. We have not yet begun to face the seamy side of clerical manpower involvement and the Church's complicity in stifling universal awakening too revolutionary to lie quietly within the "Great Society".

this challenge to the established assumptions and practices of the Church in Latin America. Illich was called to Rome in 1968 and subjected to inquisition. He refused to participate in the self-incriminating pro-In 1969 CIDOC was cedure. banned for Catholic personnel. Illich, regretting the ban, chose not to join issue with the Holy See, but renounced the privileges of priestly ministry. In the letter of renunciation he wrote, 'I expressed what must continue to be my firm intention to govern all the decisions and actions of my life comindependently of canonical authority, legislative or otherwise, special to the clergy.' He now prefers to call himself 'Ivan Illich, a Christian'.

Despite the ban, CIDOC has burgeoned into an international forum for the current institutional trends in education, as well as housing, medical services or transportation, and their relevance in the Third World.

Q. If this approach towards better designs in living has such an overwhelming prospect of futility built into it, what are your alternatives?

Hich: Without spending much theory let me give you three or four examples. Most of the Latin American countries spend at least one quarter of their budget on schooling. They all have a law specifying the minimum amount of obligatory schooling somewhere between four to six years. Not one of these countries succeeds in

getting one-third of its children through that minimum amount of schooling. The same amount spent on adult education making it possible for an adult when he wants to learn to read and to learn some other basic skills would be much more beneficial.

Let us take living. Let us take the example of the city of Lima. Lima was founded by Spaniards in the narrow plains between the Pacific Ocean and the rise of the Andes which go up to 15000 feet. Lima has doubled its population every 14 years or so in the last two generations. It has now become a city of 3 million people. It doubles its population not so much by growth from inside as by influx from outside. People from the high plains of the Andes come These are mostly the down. Indian people, Aymara and some few Quechua speaking. These people have a tremendous tradition of community. I have never seen anything more orderly than the preparation for non-violent but forceful occupation of a plot of land and construction in the dry desert-like countryside of huts out of straw mats within twenty-four hours. This is done in order to be protected by squatter laws which make it impossible for police to drive people off. Within weeks there is a full organisation in each one of these barriadas, the name given to these communities. There are now 200 to 300 quite well administered barriadas all around Lima. People live in an extremely simple but highly dignified fashion.

I have the great luck of having a very close friend, a monk, who has lived as a worker, a brickcarrier in a barriada of Lima for twenty years. I have a key to his little hut there. Over the last twelve years almost every year I have spent a week in one of these barriadas. It is a tremendously dignified, lovable, serious life that goes on there. Very simple changes in the laws are required here, basically, the expropriation of the 400 families who own 80% of the land in the plains around Lima and Araquipa, the two major cities in and around which such development takes place.

Until the very recent government

change which might bring about these changes, people did not speak about changes in law and order to allow people to live in their own fashion in barriadas they themselves built. The only question was how could one build high rise apartment houses to accommodate those poor people who live on earth floors with only a few mats protecting them from the sun and the wind.

Now, why should people not receive technical assistance to live in barriadas they themselves can plan, build and administer and why do they have to be pushed into high rise apartments? You can see the very same thing in the faveras of Rio de Janeiro which one military government after another is destroying, trampling down with tanks in order to resettle these people in prefabricated houses in places where the government planners think they belong. This I give you as an example of an alternative, of directions in which we have to defend ourselves against those that are being imposed from the outside.

Take the question of transportation. Take a country as extremely poor as Bolivia. I know that comparison in per capita income does not mean very much when one thinks of comparisons between Latin America and Asia. But there you have a country with per capita income in the neighbourhood of \$100 per year which brings Bolivia near certain Asian countries. At the moment they are at the point when cars are being imported into Bolivia. The import of every car means the outflow of extremely precious currency. In Bolivia we have a war between Mercedes, Chevrolet, Ford, Volkswagen and I do not know what other car companies. Some of the more sensible men who are attempting to run the government of Bolivia are discussing this very seriously. It is quite possible to conceive of a law which specifies that in Bolivia we do not need a vehicle which exceeds the speed of 30 to 40 miles per hour and one could solve all locomotive problems with not more than three or four different machines making for tremendous economy and ease in maintaining the basic equipment.

In the medical field, various European and North American countries make us gifts in order to develop in every country in Latin America dialytic centers, centers for keeping alive people who have no functioning kidney. I do not want to discuss the ethical issue of this kind of treatment in countries that are rich enough to afford it. Certainly every dialytic patient in hospital in Latin America means the death of many hundred others who could easily be helped by a well trained nurse capable of diagnosing the type of intestinal parasite from which we are suffering and provide extremely simple remedies.

It comes down to the fact that in Latin America at least, spiritually we have been deeply infected, Everybody who somediseased. how-and this I'd so much like to know how it is different in India because I do believe vou have a different situation in India—comes up to the state when he can read and write and opens to a culture that is broader than that of his tiny valley is already a man selected because he has accepted the value of clocktime, the value of machines which run against the clock and develop speed. Because he has accepted the basic principles of technology in his heart it is very difficult for us in Latin America to develop leadership for alternative solutions.

In looking from here to India—I may be only dreaming—it seems to me you have a country with a very, very old elite system, old elites who for centuries and millenia had an awareness of spiritual values which were expressed in terms understood beyond their little neighbourhood. Therefore. you have the basis of development of, so to speak, counterfoil elites. We do not have the same advantage in Latin America. This was a stone age culture at best when the military and Church of Spain occupied Latin America, decapitated its kings and priests and colonised the people. The folk culture on

which we live has been profoundly shaken, mixed spiritually and entirely absorbed into a western world in the Americas, a world which has roots in the stone age but is western. Perhaps, we need more spiritual-technical assistance from India than you people would ever dream of wanting to give us.

Q. In the context of bringing about change you lay a great deal of emphasis on what you call 'cultural revolution'? What do you mean and what might be the imperatives of this cultural revolution for the Third World?

Illich: Well, you know, I do not want to be harsh and nasty. However, there are certain things that are so bad that one cannot help but make nasty remarks about them. One of these is a document from Governor Rockefeller of New York to President Nixon. Mr Rockefeller whose family has. very large land holdings and industrial interests in Latin America was sent by the President to Latin America to make a report on how the two parts of the hemisphere could work together. You would not believe some of the sentences from the report. They make no sense at all. Mr Rockefeller points out that there is a very great danger that the new leadership in Latin America will be influenced by Marxism and he specifies why and how. Let me quote textually. Mr Rockefeller says in this report: 'Marxism is a dangerous philosophy when accepted by the new leadership in Latin America because

- (a) it justifies a national leadership by a vanguard elite and
- (b) it justifies personal sacrifice imposed by the state in order to bring about rational progress.'

He then goes on to say that one way of opposing these dangerous trends is to bring over Latin American military personnel for training in the United States and the Panama.

After this introduction you probably understand what I want to say. We must first of all develop people who are aware that life, future is possible without becoming addicts to education through schooling, to transportation through ever-increasing speed, to housing through ever more rigorous separation of one human being from the other in tight little compartments, of health without extending sick life through ever greater suffering, and ever greater drugging in order to make suffering bearable. We must make people aware that they can conceive goals that are different from the goals that people are being taught as the only ones in the upper realms of the school system. Then we shall become aware that there are many alternative ways open.

But, all of them exclude one thing: a common market of goods and services with those nations who have set out on the suicidal path of over-schooling, over-expansion of sick life, increased protection in the home to the extent that when I was in New York recently people warned me not go on the street because I might be killed. We cannot have a common market between these two worlds. We must face the fact that the rich nations are producing the machinery for an increased polarisation in the entire world. We have to choose to live our lives either as slaves of the Imperium, as outlying slums of the Imperium or to live a dignified but poorer life and let the rich do what they want to do. I do believe that some kind of nonviolent resistance to the products and ideas of the rich on the part of our nations is the only solution we have in order to survive as human beings.

Q. Do I understand you right if I put it this way that cultural revolution means ridding the third world of the stranglehold of institutional trends which have their origins in the developed countries?

Illich: Perfectly, perfectly, but ridding them of these institutional trends principally by freeing the imagniation of the individual from the social realities created by the rich countries. The stranglehold, the chains are that our imagination has been constained. We must liberate our imagination.

Books

THE SCHOOL THAT I'D LIKE by Edward Blishen,

Penguin Books: London, 1969.

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by Mitchell Goodman, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., Philadelphia and New York, 1970.

COMPULSORY MISEDUCATION by Paul Good-

man, Penguin Books: London, 1971.

PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED by Paulo

Freire, Herder and Herder: New York, 1970.

THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL BOOK by Soren

Hansen and Jesper Jensen with Wallace Roberts,

Pocket Books: New York, 1971.

DESCHOOLING SOCIETY by Ivan Illich, Harper

and Row: New York, 1970.

SCHOOL IS DEAD by Everett Reimer, Penguin

Book: London, 1971.

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TEACHING AS A SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY

Neil Postman, Charles Weingartner, Penguin

Book: London, 1971.

LETTER TO A TEACHER by The School of

Barbiana, Penguin Books: London, 1970.

Nobody ever said schools were perfect. Even the most conservative educators admit that the schools should be improved—usually by spending more money. Within the last five years, however, a growing number of critics have come to believe that even if the present sort of schools could be made perfect, schools should not exist. Overhaul the textbooks and syllabi, hire more teachers, build bigger, better, more numerous classrooms and laboratories and the cards are still stacked against the poor. Insist on discipline, make the exams cheat-proof, raise academic standards and the 'successful' students will still be docile, alienated, hooked on the rat race and 'getting ahead'. The crux of the criticisms is that these radical authors hold a very bad opinion of the modern society's definition of 'getting ahead'.

The problems of education and development in Latin America have produced three of the most prominent radicals: Ivan Illich, Everett Reimer and Paulo Freire. Illich and Reimer are old colleagues. Their respective books are two reports of the dialogue they began fifteen years ago when they met in Puerto Rico. Illich is director of the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico (see the interview in this issue). Reimer is director of CIDOC's continuing seminar on Alternatives in Education. Freire is the inventor of a highly successful method of teaching illiterates to read. The potentially revolu-

tionary impact of his method got him expelled in 1964 from his native Brazil where he was professor of History and Philosophy of Education at Recife University. Refuge in Chile was short-lived; then he worked as a consultant at Harvard University's School of Education and presently he is special consultant to the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is political in focus and tone, whereas Illich and Reimer are more concerned with the social effects of the educational alternatives they propose in contrast to the educational methods now existing. The other important difference is their fields of reference: Illich's proposals are meant for a very individualized education and assumes an urbanized society with access to highly developed computer/communications technology; Freire's method is intended for both urban and rural poor; it depends entirely on community dialogue and a large number of literate 'teachers'.

Deschooling Society by Illich and School is Dead by Reimer make essentially the same points in different styles. Reimer states their case succinctly in his introduction:

'School has become the universal church of a technological society, incorporating and transmitting its ideology, shaping men's minds to accept this ideology, and conferring social status in proportion to its acceptance. There is no question of man's rejecting technology. The question is only one of adaptation, direction and control. There may not be much time, and the only hope would seem to lie in education—the true education of free men capable of mastering technology rather than being enslaved by it, or by others in its name...Our major threat today is a world-wide monopoly in the domination of men's minds.'

Their criticisms fall into three broad categories: school in relation to high technology, consumer society; school in relation to social goals and school in relation to educational goals. Schools, say Illich and Reimer, are advertising agencies that make people think they need society as it is, a society of life-long non-satiety euphemized as neverending progress, a society in which technology holds out the promise of sweatless affluence and packaged prestige to all. This is an ideal already crumbling-in on the advanced classes of advanced nations; it is the ideal towards which developing nations are develop-Although there is certainly a crisis of world poverty, it stems from the existence of over-developed nations and it is for them to level down. There is simply not enough fuel, air, water on the planet to allow world consumption rates to equal the present excessive U.S. standards.

Secondly, (in the words of Reimer) 'Power and security have always been false beacons leading to

the repeated shattering of human hopes. They are false because the attainment of either ultimate power or security would be the final end of everything worthwhile in human life.'

School claims to be the door to the good life. In modern nations schools are an 'age-specific, teacher-related process, requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum', (Illich). Ideally, every child entering school has an equal chance to rise through the hierarchies of certificates and degrees until, armed with the ultimate Ph.D., all the doors of privilege swing open before him. To Illich and Reimer, not only is the ideal itself false, but it never works anyway.

In the first place, they oppose a society based on privilege. Illich writes, 'I believe that a desirable future depends on our deliberately choosing a life of action over a life of consumption, on our engendering a life style which will enable us to be spontaneous and independent yet related to each other, rather than maintaining a life style that only allows us to make and unmake, produce and consume—a style of life which is merely a way station on the road to the depletion and pollution of the environment.'

In the second place, the poor child can never catch up to the rich child, no matter how much the schools try to help him, because the real advantages of the rich child are in the home and the real disadvantages of the poor child are in the socio-political system.

Schools monopolize educational resources and attempt to define a person's worth with their dehumanizing diplomas. Worst of all, the schools establish themselves as the only legitimate 'rite of passage' in the modern world. In fact, a school's main function is not education but baby-sitting. The schools impound the young, keeping them off the streets and out of the factories. Students are taught civics and sheltered from politics. They read social studies but learn nothing of their own lives.

To break the hold of school, Illich and Reimer propose laws forbidding discrimination on the basis of a person's past educational history and abolition of compulsory school attendance. In place of schools they advocate learning webs which would function in the same manner as employment exchanges.

Illich distinguishes two kinds of learning: learning of skills and learning for creative behaviour. He does not rate one type of learning above the other but does hold that they require different types of teaching. To learn a skill such as language, electrical engineering or knitting, the learner only requires access to another person who practices that skill and is willing to teach it. Learning to think and act creatively is usually the result of dialogue and interaction with peers.

Illich and Reimer believe in education for anyone, of any age, at any time, and would accomplish this by extending the definition of 'teacher' and 'student', and by using computers to match the two for highly

individualized, anti-bureaucratic educations. Like John Dewey 30 years ago, Illich and Reimer are calling for the union of learning and life with special emphasis on learning as a way to change life.

Freire treats the dialectic of learning and life in more philosophical terms. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the key word is 'praxis' and 'praxis' is given an entirely political character. In interpreting Lenin's maxim, Freire explains his own aims in educating the oppressed: "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" means that a revolution is achieved with neither verbalism nor activism, but rather with praxis, that is, with reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed. The revolutionary effort to transform these structures radically cannot designate its leaders as its thinkers and the oppressed as mere doers.'

Freire sees oppression as dehumanizing both the exploiter who comes to see his victims as things and not people, and the exploited, who are robbed of their own voices and internalize the character of the oppressor. The oppressor will never be able to change his character, liberation can come only from the victims of oppression who will free not only themselves but their oppressors.

Freire is also against teachers in the usual sense of that word. He analyzes the system of education now prevailing as a 'banking' process. The banking approach assumes that man and the world are separate, the mind is a passive spectator, a void to be filled. Education is then simply the process of making deposits of 'knowledge'—the capital city of 'Para' is 'Belem', seven times eight is fifty-six. Students receive, catalogue and give a memorized account at exam time.

The effect of this education is to render the student passive and malleable, fit to oppress and be oppressed, to know their place in the established social order. Education for liberation cannot come through the paternalistic banking method. Authentic liberation—the process of humanization—is praxis: the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it. Education becomes a dialogue concerning concrete problems of the people's life. The aim is realization and critical thinking:

'The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on authority are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it. Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. Men teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are "owned" by the teacher.'

The key to Freire's method of adult education is 'conscientizacao' (a Portuguese word roughly translated as critical consciousness). By 'conscientizacao', he expresses his belief that no one is too ignorant to understand his own situation in the world. Although the poor and oppressed have lived for centuries in a

'culture of silence', by introducing them to dialogue with their fellows they can become critically conscious of social reality and deal constructively with it. Before teaching the poor to read and write, Freire's 'teachers' live with their 'students' and assemble a list of words which have personal political significance to members of that community—words like 'debt', 'wages', 'police', 'boss'. Various situations are sketched, a worker buying liquor, women hoeing, a queue in front of a pay office—and the pictures are discussed. The key words from these discussions come to form the lesson texts.

By this method, the poor realize that even though they may be illiterate, they already see and understand what is important in their lives. Peasants and workers learn to read within six weeks when their sentences are 'The landlord should give us better wages instead of loans and credit', rather than the traditional 'cat, rat, mat' exercises.

That Freire's work has been successful is best shown by the attacks made upon him. He is accused of creating social discontents and engendering 'destructive fanaticism' which can only bring his students pain and frustration. Freire has taken the propaganda of the literacy drives seriouslycitizens must learn to read and write so that they may participate in government. Those who learn to read from Freire are ready not only to participate in the government, they are ready to change it. They no longer see themselves through the eyes of their oppressors—as ignorant, irresponsible menials; in learning to read, they discover their own intelligence, their real competence. In Freire's words, they recover their own voices.

In looking over the radical writings from the U.S. one sees the reaction to mass society typical of practically all the social criticism coming from America now. The criticisms and suggestions in these books assume a certain level of educational opportunity that makes them relevant only to the educational problems of the middle and upper sections of Indian society.

One of the earliest attacks on America's system of mass education was Growing Up Absurd by Paul Goodman. Growing Up Absurd analyzed the school as a sort of mental institution which aimed not to cure neuroses but to standardize them. Students were systematically alienated from society and finally alienated from themselves. Goodman elaborates these criticisms in a later book, Compulsory Miseducation. He is not against schools and teachers, but rather against forcing schools and teachers on anyone. especially the young. Youth, he says, is a much too impressionable age; a time when one is most creative and energetic and at the same time, most vulnerable. Again, the real complaint is against the potential product of schools: a brainwashed society. school system as a whole, with its increasingly set curriculum, stricter grading, incredible amounts of testing, is already a vast machine to shape acceptable responses.'

Goodman believes primary schools are alright—they free children from their mothers and vice versa—but

he would make these schools enjoyable for the pupils. For the older students he proposes three alternatives: (1) technical/professional apprenticeships in national works programmes with further attendance at technical/professional colleges when necessary; (2) purely academic high schools and colleges; (3) institutions modelled on the Danish Folk Schools to teach practical sciences, world affairs, music and crafts. He stresses that these are not the only alternatives, that there should be widespread experimentation. author, however, does not touch on any method or necessary preconditions for change. He assumes that effective new learning institutions will be established by the government, (e.g., the national works pro-This seems unrealistic, considering past gramme). performance of governments and educational bureaucracies and the class interests involved.

The difficulty of changing the educational system is perhaps what prompted Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner to write Teaching as a Subversive Activity. The authors accept schools and teachers as a fact of life for the forseeable future. Because of the existing compulsory school system, teachers have access to whole generations; schools are an ideal place to expose bourgeois myths. Their first objective is to teach the students to ask questions often and well about things that are really important to them. Like Freire, they feel dialogue is the key to developing critical awareness. The essential prerequisite for approach is a liberated teacher and, ideally, no syllabus or exams.

For those who insist that students must learn geography, chemistry, literature, etc., Postman and Wiengartner have an interesting answer:

'What students do in the classroom is what they learn (as Dewey would say), and what they learn to do is the classroom's message (as McLuhan would say)...So what students mostly do in class is guess what the teacher wants them to say...And since it is indisputably (if not publicly) recognized that the ostensible "content" of such courses is rarely remembered beyond the last quiz (in which you are required to remember only 65% of what you were told), it is safe to say that just about the only learning that occurs in classrooms is that which is communicated by the structure of the classroom itself...What are these learnings? What are these messages? Here are a few among many, none of which you will ever find listed among the aims of teachers: Passive acceptance is a more desirable response to ideas than active criticism. Discovering knowledge is beyond the power of students and is, in any case, none of their business. Recall is the highest form of intellectual achievement, and the collection of unrelated "facts" is the goal of education. The voice of authority is to be trusted and valued more than independent judgement. One's own ideas and those of one's classmates are inconsequential. Feelings are irrelevant in education. There is always a single, unambiguous Right Answer to a question. English is not History and History is not Science and Science is not Art and Art is not Music, and Art and Music are minor subjects and English, History and Science are major subjects and a subject is something you "take" and, when you have taken it, you have "had" it, you are immune and need not take it again. (The Vaccination Theory of Education?)

The point is, in a world changing as rapidly as ours is, the only appropriate 'subject' for schools to teach is how to distinguish reality and act on what one learns.

One cannot leave off a discussion of the American writings without mentioning that much of what has been written has appeared in small magazines, newsletters, and the underground press. Two very worthwhile collections of this ephemera have recently come out: The Movement Towards a New America, assembled by Michael Goodman, and The Experimental Book, assembled by Blair Hamilton, Dave Glassner and Philip Werdell. The latter is more a magazine than a book: it is appearing serially by subscription.

Radical education has been an old idea in Europe for many years. Some of its pioneers were so successful they became establishments themselves, e.g., Maria Montessori, Pestalozi and A.S. Neill. The new criticisms here are again coming from the Left, again calling for a new social and education ideology. Three books—from England, Denmark and Italy, respectively—are unusual. The other books we have discussed are written about students for adults but two of these books were written by students themselves and the third was written to be read and used by students.

Undoubtedly, the most forceful of these three is Letter to a Teacher by the School of Barbiana. Barbiana is an isolated, impoverished agricultural village in Tuscany. In 1954 the newly-arrived priest of the Barbiana church began a little school for the farm children who were unable to function in the overwhelmingly middle-class atmosphere of the school in the next town. The school's most important lessons were study and understanding of problems directly related to the students own lives.

Letter to a Teacher was written by eight of the students as a full-year project reflecting their study of the Italian school system and their understanding of its effects on the children of the poor. The book that resulted is one of the few sources available for discovering the reality of 'backward class' students. The style is direct, personal and angry. The students make their case against the Italian school system in concrete, documented terms. The lean, compact prose of Letter to a Teacher makes it difficult to further condense the book's arguments. To put it as simply as they might put it: school is rigged. Middle class teachers, attitudes, pre-suppositions, even middle-class speech, effectively excludes the poor while maintaining the illusion of fair and equal educational opportunity for all.

The second book essentially by children, *The School that I'd Like*, edited by Edward Blishen, is the result of an essay competition conducted by *The*

Observer magazine in 1967. The book is composed of excerpts from those essays. What is important here is not the precision of analysis or the level of political awareness exhibited by the contributors but the authenticity of their criticisms, the sensible and serious attitude toward the subject and the consistency of their pleas to get out of the classroom. The writers are not asking to do away with teachers and classrooms altogether, they are simply requesting more responsibility for their own learning. They want to discover things for themselves.

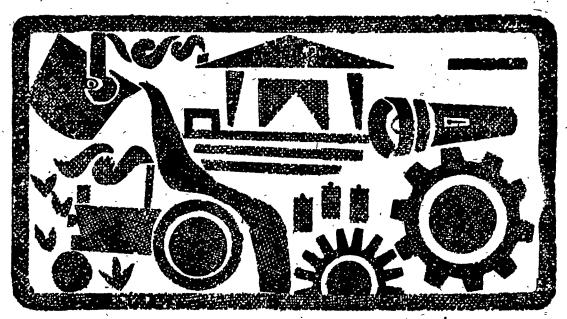
If The School that I'd Like expresses the goal, then The Little Red School Book by Soren Hansen and Jesper Jensen is tactics. Since it was first written in Denmark, it has been issued in British and then American versions. Its explicit information on sex and drugs has made the book a center of controversy but the more central issue of the book is to convince students of their own power to change the school and show them how to do it. Although no particular political ideology is ever mentioned by name, Marxist principles are strongly in evidence.

The authors tell students, 'Many changes are taking place in schools these days. If they are changes in which you have played no part, you can be pretty certain that they aren't to your advantage. are made so that the people who have power can keep it. Nearly all the changes in which you're allowed to participate are in things which aren't very important. The real and difficult changes are those which give more and more people power to decide more and more things for themselves. You can't separate school from society. You have to change one to be able to improve the other. But don't let this put you off. Work for change always starts with you. The struggle is carried on by many different people in many different places. But it's the same struggle.'

It is quite possible that this book may make a bigger contribution towards changing the schools than any of the other books mentioned in this survey. Illich, Friere, et. al. are aiming at a small radical elite, The Little Red School Book is directed towards the largest, and most naturally revolutionary group—students themselves. Persons interested in new educational modes here might do well to adapt The Little Red School Book for Indian students.

Not long ago a friend remarked that if the British wanted to see their schools as these were fifty years ago they could observe them here, perfectly preserved and still functioning. In spite of the Kothari Commission Report, in spite of the evident inadequacies of the schools and universities, there has been little discussion of alternatives to the present system and even less actual experimentation. In closing, I acknowledge the limited nature of this survey, but I have tried to present a representative selection of books and a comprehensive view of the new directions in educational thinking around the world. The Indian educational system deserves a similar rethinking and hopefully these critiques will be forthcoming.

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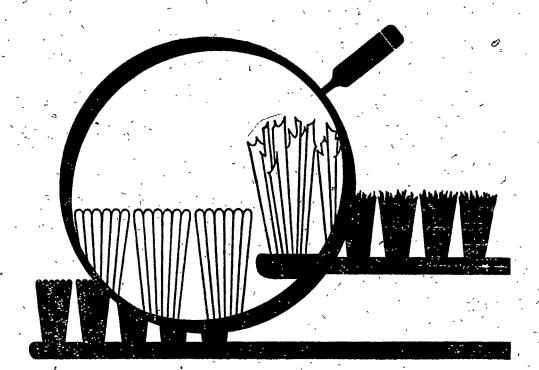
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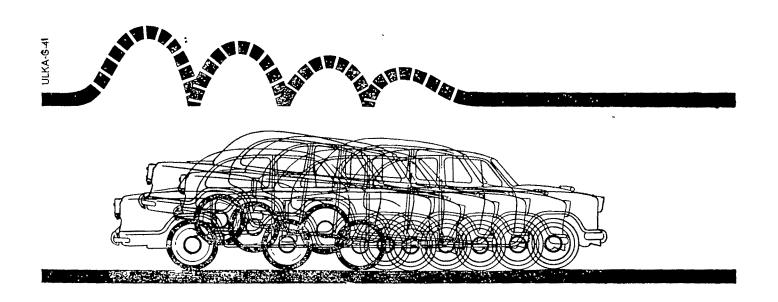
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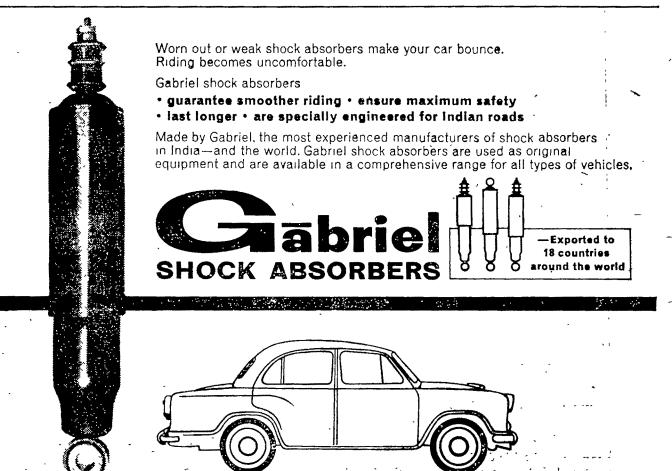
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Communications

MAY I be permitted a second say in your discussion on the social sciences, especially in relation to Sudhir Chandra, Rajni Kothari, P. C. Joshi, and Ashis Nandy (September 1972)?

1. Regional Concreteness: I feel uneasy with Sudhir Chandra's statement, 'Concepts in the social sciences...are not wholly abstract in spite of varying degrees of universal validity. They retain in a subtle way something of the regional concreteness of the empirical data from which they are abstracted.' Do they, really? Consider these: culture, function, causality, network, role, norm, phenomenon, social distance, relative deprivation, development cycle of social groups. This is a quick list.

Certainly, social science concepts are often regionally limited, and many would always remain so; yet, I am not persuaded that the social sciences cannot have concepts free from regional concreteness. (I shall only mention here the ethnomethodologists who, in contrast, place the highest value on this local

concreteness: see my forthcoming review of Jack D. Douglas ,ed., 'Understanding Everyday Life', 1970, in *Sociological Bulletin*.)

2. Quality and relevance: As the several contributions show, the issue is tricky. Sudhir Chandra's statement ignores the context in which 'quality' without 'relevance' lost its lustre in India. This happened because Sudhir Chandra's 'weathercocks' claimed quality for their work-legitimizing their claims with certificates received from the West, readily given because the weathercocks' work provided westerners with useful footnotes. Andre Beteille did not create the qualityrelevance dichotomy: he simply plucks it out of our recent intellectual history, such as it is. When Nandy asks whether 'the inept could ever be relevant', the answer, of course, is no; but that is strawmanship: the real issue, stated by Joshi, is that relevance demands 'innovations in...methodology and approaches...' and, on this, I think, there is general agreement. There is no real issue here to join battles over. (I explore some of these

difficulties in my 'Tension points in the social sciences,' ms.)

3. Individuals and institutions: 'Stray individuals, not the system that obtains, seem to hold whatever promise there is for the social science in the country,' concludes Sudhir Chandra with a heroic flourish.* But again the historian appears to lack a sense of history. We have not been short of stars: Rabindranath Tagore, Jadunath Sarkar, D. P. Mukherji, S. Radhakrishnan, P. C. Mahalanobis. We have long pinned our hopes on the loner—and failed.

Kothari and Nandy are right: institutionalized processes are necessary for individuals operating them to ensure continuous intellectual renewal; but they are only partially right: the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies is not really the prototype for our essential needs. Research is fun, but it we are afraid to get into teaching departments, we won't go far. (True, I hav'nt taught in India for even a day, but not for lack of trying.) It is the rot in our teaching departments that pollutes the stream lower down: if the research men won't teach, where will the next generation of research men come from? The West again?

No, our teaching departments have to be shaped so that these provide the nurturant settings within the universities. Given limited resources—Nandy mentions coldly, but accurately, 50 or 75 heads in all the social sciences—we must locate a few departments in each discipline to develop into a stratum of quality: not UGC grants for Centres of Advanced Study so much as individuals deciding collegially where there is hope and then moving in: and hope did not begin—and has not ended—with Jawaharlal Nehru University.

In my judgement, this stratum for any discipline will need three or four departments as a minimum: You need that many to send one department's MA's to another for PhDs, find external examiners, prevent in-breeding of faculty, and have a productive place to move to when inter-personal relations within a department get sour (as they are bound to, off and on). And first class teaching departments are not built in a day.

A word in conclusion. Both Kothari and Nandy have acid things to say about this Institute, and they are quite right. Yet, if this Institute has been the sinner at times, it has also been sinned against much. If those who have a choice between coming

here and going to Palo Alto and the like consistently choose the latter, inevitably IIAS will be a place for the leftovers: you cannot then turn around and bemoan its being such a place. If our institutions have to be built, the building has to be done by us.

Satish Saberwal
Indian Institute of Advanced Study,
Simla

'DECENTRALISATION', the term coined by the technocrats of politics has only helped to increase the bulk of our socialistic vocabulary. In the present set up, where '...corruption keeps the administration going as otherwise the files will not move from one desk to another. The same old men and institutions finance the same old political parties. The old system of education continues to churn out unemployable graduates by thousands and tens of thousands... ('Shankar's Weekly' Editorial, 20.8.1972). I hesitate to conclude that the decentralisation of administrative powers, by extending the administering bodies even to the village level, alone can contribute anything significant to the positive side. The hierarchical atmosphere and the influences of the elite and affluent class even now dominate the working people—from the metropolitan city level to the nooks and corners of the Indian villages.

The sectarian, religious and communal influences stand in the way of people from getting 'equal opportunities' for education. (Look how religious and communal fanatics took up their own swords to safeguard their own vested interests when the ruling government thought of taking measures to minimise the undesirable influences which are prevalent in the field of education in a highly-literate State like Kerala).

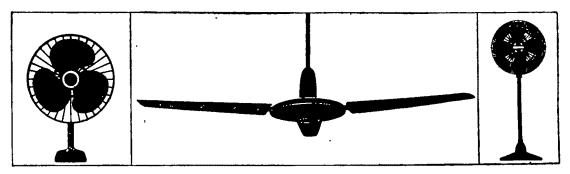
Decentralisation, nationalisation, etc., are the measures which are essential only to alter the super-structure of a society. Retaining the basic ideology of social and economic concepts and the pattern of educational systems which make up the infra-structure of a society, any attempt to bring out changes in the external structure alone will end in total chaos.

It would be ideal if 'democratic decentralisation in India cut across politics, economics sociology and psychology' as Singhvi mentioned (Seminar, August 1972), but the truth remains that such 'terms' do not come out of the smoke-screen of the nation's vicious political arena.

K. C. M. Raja CFTRI, Mysore

^{*}There is a profound sense in which a scholar, ultimately, stands—or ought to stand—alone: without factional support, without special pleading; with this there would be no quarrel, but Sudhir is not arguing this.

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All qualified Architects/Town Planners and Architectural/Town Planning firms will be eligible to participate in the competition scheme, the details of which are given in the brochure which would be available from the office of the Delhi Development Authority from the 15th September, 1972 onwards. However, the salient features of the scheme are given below :-

A - AREA AND LOCALITY: There will be three separate competitions for three areas, the particulars of which are :-

Name of the locality Area 1. Group housing pockets in the Delhi Development Authority's Malviya Nagar Residential Scheme 2. Group Housing Pockets in the Delhi Development Autho rity's Scheme near Kalkaji 3. Delhi Development

Authority's Scheme near Dilshad Garden,

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Approximate | Category of the houses and the proportion thereof

10.1 Hectares)

Houses for the 'Janta' low and middle income groups in the proportion of 20, 40 and 40 respectively.

(7.7 Hectares)

-do-

(16.2Hectares)

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B-LAYOUT PLAN & ACCOMMODATION: The competitor will have to submit an integrated layout plan for the area indicating, inter alia, the design, placement, grouping of houses, local and convenient shopping centres, parks and playgrounds etc.

The scale of accommodations to be provided for the 'Janta' category should range between 25.5 and 30 sq. metres for the low income group, between 51 and 60 sq. metres, and for the middle income group, between 74 and 93 sq. metres.

C - COST OF UNITS: The cost of the buildings for the Janta category houses shall not exceed Rs. 216/- per sq. metre for the low income group, Rs. 269/- per sq. metre and for the middle income group Rs. 323/- per sq. metre.

D - PRIZES: For each of the three competitors, there will be separate prizes. The first prize will be of Rs. 25,000, the second prize of Rs. 10,000 and the third prize of Rs. 7,500.

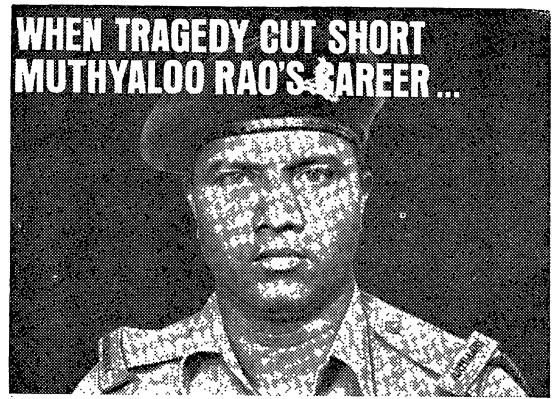
E - CLOSING DATES: The closing date for competition for Malviya Nagar area will be 30th November, 1972, for Kalkaji area, 31st December, 1972 and for Dilshad Garden area, 31st January, 1973. Survey and technical data in respect of all the three areas will be available from the office of the Delhi Development Authority.

F-BOARD OF ASSESSORS: A high level Board of Assessors under the Chairmanship of the Lt. Governor will be set up and there will be representatives of premier insti-tutions dealing with design, architecture and town planning on this Board.

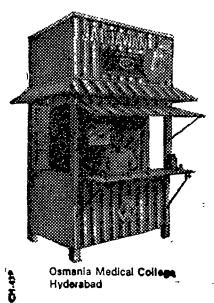
G-ENTRIES TO BE NOM DE PLUME : All entries will be made under nom de plume. The name and address of the competitor will be obtained in a separate sealed cover which should be addressed to the Vice-Chairman, Delhi Development Authority by name of these sealed covers would be opened before the Board of Assessors after the Board has selected the prize-winners under nom-de-plume.

> **JAGMOHAN** Vice-Chairman

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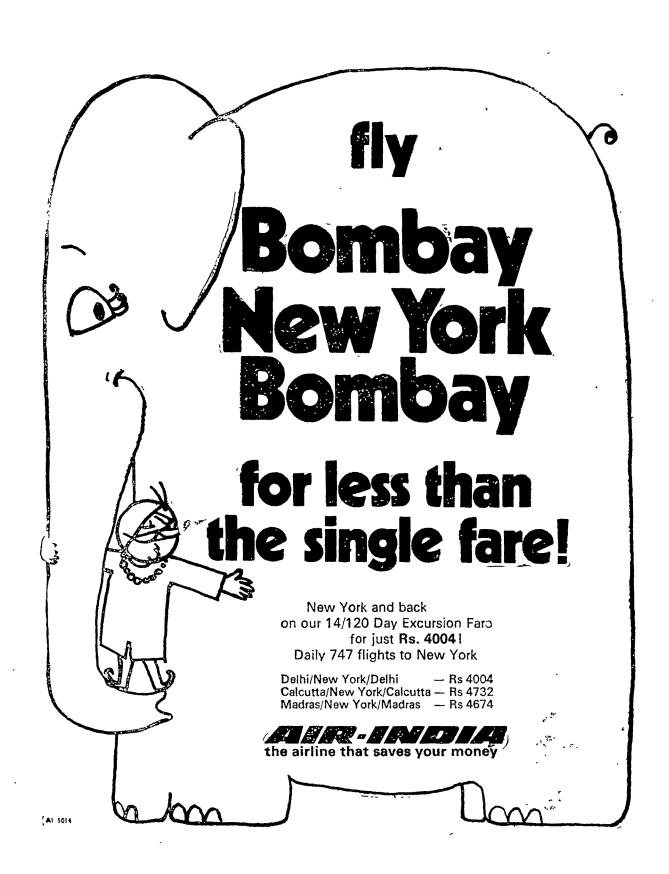
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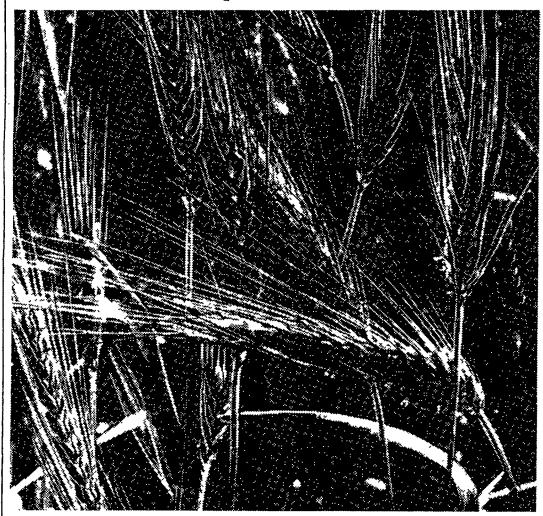
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under different conditions, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has launched a country-wide programme. A chain of research stations located in different States conduct thousands of experiments to test the effectiveness of various nutrients and their mixtures for crops in varying soil and climatic conditions. And the work doesn't end here -it is followed by actual trials in the farmers' fields.

This generates a mass of data which has to be compiled, corelated and converted into meaningful facts for use by farmers. To accomplish all this, the Institute of Agricultural Research Statistics of the ICAR uses modern techniques and

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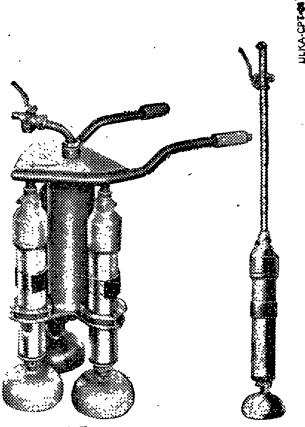
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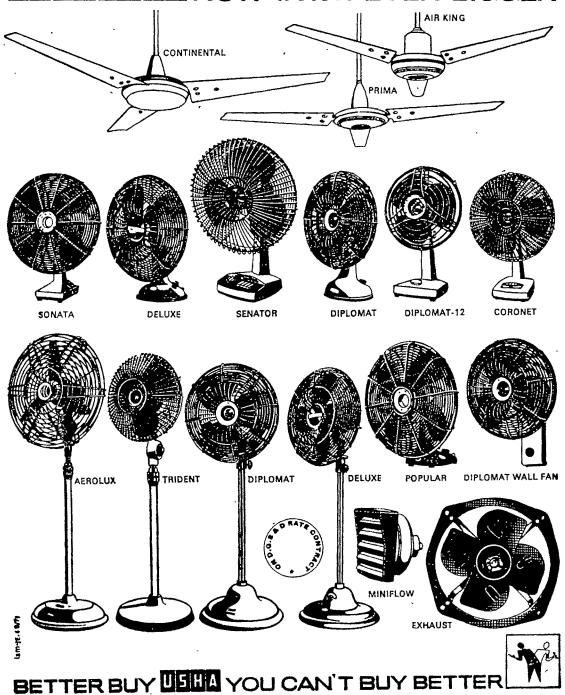
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COMMUNICATIONS

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The problem

NO major political party in India is willing to accept restraints on its electioneering. This is an insuperable obstacle to the organisation of honest elections. Each party notices the mote in others' eyes, not the beam in its own. Malpractices are committed by other parties, never by itself. Yet without some special advantage it possesses somewhere, no political party would survive; nor can it win elections without mobilising the unfair advantages wherever it possesses them. Thus, the roots of corruption reach down to the bases of political organisation.

How can the Swatantra Party expect to win any seat, far less exercise state-wide or nation-wide influence without the blessings of big businessmen and the backing of some ruling houses? Where would the Jana Sangh hope to make itself felt if the ex-rulers that support it and the urban business class do not flex their muscles? The Socialist Party, C.P.I., C.P.M. have pockets where they exercise dominant influence; they would be courting political suicide if they allowed political good manners to hold them back.

The roots of corruption stretch farther. Several hundred or thousand crores of black money circulates in the Indian economy. It cannot earn profits without political protection. Experience of parliamentary governments all over the world delivers a clear lesson that you cannot have clean politics or honest government when business is corrupt. Black money will find its way into politics: there is no way to stop it. A crucial step towards clean elections in India is to stop

the emission of black money at the source and curb business corruption. When I discussed this matter with a leading monetary expert, he exclaimed: 'Why should we eliminate black money; how else would we finance elections?'

For argument's sake, if we permit ourselves to believe that Simon-pure politicians can be found in India who, like the lotus flower in the proverbial ponds of filthy water, remain unsullied by the rampant corruption around them, will India be better off? Are these rare birds, the uncorrupted politicians, more effective in promoting the well-being of the masses? Do they possess the skills of political leadership?

It is utterly naive to believe that clean politics will beget clean business or mitigate social and caste oppression. Gandhi and his followers lived in our midst but corruption today is more widespread and involves far vaster sums of money than in Gandhi's time. Business has a dynamic of its own, and unless we grapple with the corruption inherent in it, we'll merely waste our efforts. Yet the seminar on Citizen and Democracy, held under Gandhian auspices in New Delhi last year, focussed its criticism exclusively on government corruption with not a word on the root of the corruption: the business world.

What holds true of financial malpractices in the elections applies to the use of goondas, rowdies, youth-this and youth-that who unleash violence. All large cities have substantial underworld elements which, like black money, require protection. Arrangements for mutual advantage between goondas and political parties are so

10

logical for the benefit of both that no law, nor moral constraint, could stop them. It is fair to say that the underworld is not the creation of political parties; far more it results from the economic situation that prevails in the country accentuated by the special circumstances of the cities. If the underworld is a cancerous growth, it is caused by the sickness of our body social.

But the underworld, like black money, is a dynamic force; for it to sit still is to commit suicide. Politics in a society must tap the dynamic elements in the society, be these moral or immoral. So long as politics in India is openly competitive, no party can afford to ignore these dynamic elements because of the well-founded fear that any force it does not tap to its advantage will be mobilised by its rivals to its disadvantage. Today the ruling party gathers the fruits, but tomorrow it may weaken when the parties now driven to the wall will need the same despicable resources to gain power.

A third corrupting element in Indian politics is casteism and communalism. Needless to say, no political party can ignore these: wherever there are many Muslims in a constituency, Muslim candidates are put up by the different parties; similarly with Sikhs, Christians, and the different castes of Hindus, etc. Denunciation of communalism and casteism and well-meaning reformers and intellectuals is at best self-deceiving; more often it is hypocritical.

But much more vicious in its impact on Indian politics is the circumstance that political leaders

and activists of all parties belong to the upper classes—the top ten per cent. This is as true of conservative or center parties as it is of the left wing or the revolutionary. Any political party that tries seriously to eschew these elements of corruption in its activity deserves the fate that will soon befall it.

In short, political parties operate in a social milieu where forces of corruption and immorality abound. No major party has escaped untainted and unscathed, nor can any plan their future activity by excluding the use of the forces. No doubt it is part of the game for every party to profess itself on the side of the angels and loudly denounce all evil practices. This may delude the innocent; to the others it can only be a form of self-delusion.

Let us take specific cases. In the mid-term election to the Lok Sabha held in March, 1971, the outcome was far from clear to most observers. Different State governments were headed by different parties, many under coalitions. It was the election in which businessmen participated in large numbers and, in many of their constituencies, money flowed like water. There was violence in several places, but this was perpetrated not by any one party, but by almost all of them. Thus, the Akalis in Punjab were accused of terrorising voters, particularly Harijans. Money was alleged to have been collected by all means whatever. In Gujarat, force and resources backed the Organisation Congress. In Uttar Pradesh, even the Prime Minister was

threatened. However, the result was a landslide tor the Congress Party.

After the election the charge was made, vehemently by the opposition parties, particularly the Jana Sangh, that 'magic' link was used by the Congress Party to defraud the opposition of the votes that were legitimately theirs. Unfortunately no one has yet gone thoroughly into the allegation for it throws vivid light on the psychopathology of Indian politics. The allegations about 'mysterious' techniques, forces, happenings give us insights into the Indian mind, particularly of the urban classes, which provides a clue to the socioeconomic crisis that besets the country. Our purpose in relating this incident is to point to the link between black magic and black money, between superstition and corruption.

But other important points emerge. The total amount of money, almost all of it illegitimate, spent on the 1971 midterm election was much greater than on the State assembly elections in 1972. Similarly, the violence and coercion were certainly as widespread in 1971 as in the more recent election. Why then was the issue of corruption and violence not raised in 1971 and why did magic ink find so much credence?

There are, of course, some psychological reasons. Some parties would not believe that the people could desert them, that they might possibly be beaten. It is essential to stick to one's belief than to accept reality. But why was no charge of magic ink being used made in the 1972 election? Conversely and more importantly, why was no charge made about financial skulduggery and use of violence in the 1971 election, when these were as widespread as in 1972? Certainly more money was raised by foul means in 1971 than this year, there was more widespread coercion and violence then, but few allegations

This leads us to the heart of the matter. In 1971, money was raised by unfair means and misused by almost all parties on a comparable basis. The election was unpredictable, so businessmen paid to all parties. Or they had reason to expect that this or that party would win; hence they backed it. Many businessmen stood for election and spent money copiously. The same was true of coercion used against the lower castes and poorer classes. To an extent coercion was used by all parties. Thus, where the 1971 election was concerned, no party had the justification to point a finger against any other. Only magic ink was available to be thrown at the victor.

The 1972 election was different. Its outcome was foregone. Businessmen and moneyed people were unwilling to invest as readily in the opposition parties as they were a year earlier. Hence the Congress Party could easily skim off the cream. Local influentials in different parts of the country saw the indelible writing on the wall. Even the goondas in Calcutta knew who their ann-data was going to be. Thus, the distribution

of the resources for electioneering was distributed disproportionately in favour of the Congress Party.

Even though the total amount of illegitimate money used in 1972 is probably smaller than in the preceding election, and the total country-wide incidence of coercion and violence was no greater, the issue of unfair elections has been raised vociferously. But the magic ink which, if it was useable at all, might have been employed better this year, is not mentioned by anyone.

In short, in 1971 there was a rough balance of 'crookedness' among the parties; hence there were no accusations. Only the results were onesided in favouring the Congress Party and the complaints were about it. This year the results were as expected (except in West Bengal), hence no complaints about the results. But the illegitimate resources were not distributed among the parties equitably; so the complaints are loud on this issue. Before we pursue this point further, we must revert to West Bengal, which provides a poignant exception to the general pattern.

In West Bengal there was a lopsided distribution of resources and unexpected results. It is logical enough to assume that a lopsided concentration of money and muscle power would lead to a lopsided majority in the legislature, but neither the winning side nor the losing was certain about it. The unexpected success of the Congress mobilisation of money and muscles have embarrassed it and driven the opposition front to desperation and outrage.

The moralistic idiom in which the debate of electoral malpractices or political corruption is carried on prevents a realistic grasp of the problem and hinders a solution. Political struggle is for power, not for righteousness. Elements of political power include psychological and moral values, but also money, organisation, force, coercion. If politics are subordinated to moral rules, power slips out of control of political institutions; a political party or parliament that loses its sense of power will become impotent and irrelevant; it will be unable to serve the causes of social reform, justice, progress. Luckily for us. Indian politicians are too realistic to subordinate their political ambitions to merely moralistic considerations.

Although there is little danger that moral considerations will overwhelm the sense of political reality, a serious threat is posed by our penchant for legalism. Undoubtedly against her better judgment, the Prime Minister has promised a legal enactment to bar defections by legislators. If such a law is enacted, it will be respected more in breach than compliance. This would add to the general disrespect for unrealistic laws and regulations that already clutter the code books, providing a refuge for corruption.

There are now demands that election laws should be tightened or new election laws should

be enacted. Neither moral preaching, nor legal enactments will make much difference to actual electioneering; at best manipulation will be driven further underground, where its working will appear irrational and serve to confuse the people. Legalism is the brother of moralism; both bespeak an escapist approach to the political problems of fair elections and decorous behaviour of the legislators in respect of defections etc.

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Cynicism is the obverse of perfectionism. Neither has a place in practical politics. A realistic approach would look at the situation and circumstances of a society and its political system. No political system in the world is entirely honest, fair, open. A myth has been foisted on the gullible in India that 'advanced' or developed societies have near-perfect elections; that Indian politics is corrupt because Indian society is 'underdeveloped'.

The myth is a lie coated with the veneer of truth. The crucial reasons for political corruption include, in the first place, the nature of bourgeois democracy. Where the masses accept bourgeois democracy along with its counterpart of the capitalist economy, there is little need for the ruling class to use bribes, coercion, or other tricks.

The parliamentary regimes idealised by the writers, such as those of Britain, Switzerland, Sweden, are exploitative politico-economic systems which are suffered willingly by the masses. When reformers in India hold out these regimes as models for emulation, they should bear in mind that it implies the acceptance of capitalist democracy. Although the capitalist system (with heavy State partnership in it) is well-entrenched in India, it is not widely accepted and as yet is far from stabilised.

The great electoral battle of March 1971, in which money and muscle power were mobilised on a vast scale by all the contestants, sprang directly from the politico-economic crisis of Indian capitalism. Enemies of feudalism and capitalism who demand fair elections should realise that fairness is possible only if they decide to operate within capitalist democracy, as do the communists in France, Italy, Scandinavia.

Next in importance to the stability of the politico-economic system comes the texture of the society in which electoral politics operates. Societies differ widely; so do the means of mobilising the political power in them. The process of political mobilisation in Pakistan or Iran or Nepal differs radically from that in India. While learning from the experience of other countries, we should look closely at the morphology and dynamics of our own society to grasp the processes of its political activation.

Relevant to our discussion is the level of tolerance of unethical and unfair means. In a

society that retains moral vitality and holds on to decency, there is a point beyond which the use of unfair means begins to cause revulsion and produces contrary results. We all know of instances where a poor voter accepts a bribe from each of the candidates, then calmly votes for the one of his choice. Lopsidedly heavy bribes, or denial of vote in secrecy, goes beyond the level of tolerance and produces forced choices, negating democracy entirely, or provokes a counter reaction against the big briber or arm-twister.

One must await the findings of the J. P. Narayan panel on the election tactics in West Bengal, although the writer's own impression from a general survey is that strong arm methods were used on a scale that goes beyond acceptance by our society which is very tolerant of deviations in both directions from the usually accepted moral code. In short, the danger is that corruption and coercion may reach a level where the fabric of society and polity is threatened with rupture.

Moral outrage is an appropriate response to evil acts. It should be accompanied by a sense of reality. Casteism, communalism and corruption are of the essence of Indian reality. Equally real is the recognition of their harmful effects. India is in a state of dialectical tension that characterises any healthy and dynamic society; our purpose is to ensure that social equality and national cohesion are achieved as rapidly as possible.

The means for overcoming the evils of casteism, class dominance, communalism are these very evils. Politics in India is real because it uses the means against themselves. It is a process of self-transcendence of the society. In short, the solution to a problem lies within the problem. A society cannot be reformed from the outside. It can only reform itself by employing the means available to it. The way to curb unfair practices in the elections are to be sought in the nature of the unfair means employed, in an analysis of their effectiveness or ineffectiveness, their impact on the working of the Indian political system. We must then try to evolve alternative means that would be equally effective in the political mobilisation of the masses while producing fewer harmful side-effects.

This requires an utterly frank discussion among political leaders themselves, because they know the facts better than anyone not within the political core. Such discussion is unlikely although not impossible. If we recognise that playing upon communal tensions is as much an election malpractice as is misuse of official machinery, or repression by landlords against untouchables is as evil as the use of illegitimate money, that political boycott by traders of those dependent upon them is as wrong as denial of government licences to firms that won't help the ruling party, that force and coercion is used by all major

political parties when they have the opportunity to use it, when all this and more is accepted by the political leaders, we shall be able to make a beginning towards cleaner elections.

So long as political parties do not acknowledge that they employ unfair means but accuse only others, no ground exists for electoral reforms. Corruption in elections is a political problem, not legal, nor primarily moral. It is a matter of voluntary responsibility by the political parties themselves.

Within the limits outlined above, the crucial issue that emerges is the distinction between the inherent badness of means used and the reaction of the people, particularly the political parties. The latter protest on certain occasions but not on all occasions when unfair means are used. From the analysis it follows that parties cry 'foul' when the results vary too far from their expectations (as was the case with the Jana Sangh in March 1971) or when the availability of resources which are largely illegal, is too unequally available to the different parties (as was the case with the C.P.M. in West Bengal but not, let us note, with the Akalis in Punjab). Let us admit that most of the money used in the elections comes from non-legitimate sources, the parties cry foul only when they do not get their share. If these conclusions are valid, we have the means of controlling malpractices.

Realistic forecasts are needed of the chances of the different political parties for winning votes and seats. For this we need a deeper analysis of the movement of the opinions and trends of opinion among the masses. This is the responsibility of the media of mass information, particularly newspapers and journals. But newspapers are cut off from the masses, journalists live within a world of involuted narcissism. Political parties tend to turn inwards, to lose touch with the masses, to bring in new ideas and perspectives, to reflect mass opinions and needs.

Bribes and coercion are needed as compensations for a genuine relationship with the masses. One may grant that parliamentary government tends to loosen the bonds between the masses and their elected representatives. George Fernandes, the giant killer of Bombay in 1967, lost miserably in 1971 because he lost touch with the masses in the intervening four years. But this tendency towards disassociation must be counteracted by the parties and other institutions, such as newspapers, journals, research groups. At the same time party leaders must orient themselves to the social reality, thus reducing the need for skullduggery.

Would proportional representation eliminate the feeling of getting an unfair deal from which many parties suffer? The present constituency based electoral system requires a party to throw in massive resources in at least some areas in order to score a win. Under P. R. there would be no need for excessive concentration involv-

ing the use of unfair practices, for a more widely distributed effort, spread over an entire State, probably a more rational propaganda would suffice.

The case for and against P.R. has been argued so often that it would be futile to repeat it here. Realistically speaking, there is no chance of its being adopted. The public is scared of political fragmentation, particularly after the experience of instability in the States following the 1967 election. The ruling party will never accept the P.R. system which will make it a minority in the Parliament and in many States.

It should be kept in mind that the beneficiaries of the present system are not only the ruling party but also others. Where the Congress Party may win a massive majority of seats with a marginal plurality of the votes, it may also lose massively with only a marginal shift of votes against it. P. R., while denying overwhelming majority of seats to the front-running party, also condemns others to minority status. Thus it tends to freeze the status quo.

The Jana Sangh in Delhi in 1967, the left front in West Bengal in 1967 and 1969, Swatantra in Orissa in 1967 and 1971, D.M.K. in Tamil Nadu in the same years, the Akalis in Punjab have been beneficiaries of the present system. It is doubtful that the parties that tasted power, or still have hope of winning majorities in the future, would accept P.R.

Many nations have evolved methods of curbing expenditure on elections. In France, political parties can put up posters only in special places. West Germany tried the experiment of giving government funds to the political parties to keep them from becoming dependent upon big business or labour unions. For us the most successful example of control on electioneering is provided by Ceylon, which bans public meetings or processions by political parties. Election posters may be displayed only inside the buildings, not outdoors. Each candidate may send out two mailings to each voter in his constituency free of cost. No candidate may offer transportation to the voters on election day.

Ceylon's success in enforcing these rules is remarkable. But parties in India are unwilling to emulate Ceylon's example. Who in India would forbear to blacken the walls in cities with posters and slogans? Would any party forego public meetings and processions? Ceylon is incomparably poorer than India in the expertise of bypassing laws, rules, regulations. Moreover, in Ceylon a parliamentary select committee to analyse, discuss, and recommend the changes is appointed after every general election.

The tendency in India is to appoint an expert committee which is motivated by high moral principles but fails to come to grips with the real issues. The thing we can learn from Ceylon is that responsibility for making elections cleaner

and fairer rests upon the politicians, particularly upon the parliament.

Conduct of elections is a political matter. The Election Commission in India is often put in an awkward position. In law it is entirely independent, a quasi-judicial body. In fact it is a key element in the political set-up and in any crucial struggle it cannot stay neutral. This is not to deny that the Commission has done a creditable job in difficult situations, but it cannot ensure compliance with election laws or rules of fair play. The Commission cannot discharge these tasks; it should divest themselves of them. Homilies on good conduct abound in the reports of the Commission but have no practical effect.

Moreover, if trust and understanding are lacking between the parties (or between the parties and the public) no election or counting procedure will be convincing. Ballots with counterfoils will be as suspect as those without tails: votes from an entire constituency mixed together are as subject to manipulation as those counted separately in each polling station. No gimmick, no laws, however stringent and leak-proof, will ensure fairness or instill confidence.

It is in the nature of political power to be present at one place and absent at others. All over the world parties in power enjoy an advantage over those out of power. The governments have initiative in proclaiming policies. enacting laws, making (or postponing) decisions, grabbing headlines, often choosing the time and issues for election. These advantages of the party in power are taken for granted everywhere—except in India, where some people demand that governments should resign well ahead of the elections, which should be held under a non-party (or all-party) government! Then alone would we have strictly fair elections.

If the idealists could be convinced that bias and partiality are inherent in political power, which in turn is part and parcel of sovereignty and national independence, would they advocate that India should give up its independence in order that there be fairness? There is, of course, the other side to the government's advantage at election time. When things are going badly (as they are for Nixon in Viet Nam), the Government cannot disavow responsibility and must pay (as did President Johnson and the Democratic Party in 1968 for the Viet Nam war).

The sense of helplessness that many opposition parties experience in facing a government firmly in the saddle cannot be mitigated by quack remedies. Except under an unusual constellation of circumstances, defeating a party in power is an uphill task. An opposition party needs to put in many times the amount of effort (including intellectual effort) to achieve the same success as the ruling party. This is part of the game of politics. There can be no equality in this respect between the party in power and those out of it. The odds are stacked even more heavily against

parties that seek to alter the socio-economic system radically; they accept the odds or give up.

Until the politico-economic system in the country achieves relative stability and gains acceptance by the masses, elections will precipitate confrontations with very high stakes; adversaries are unlikely to accept constraints or laws or rules of fairplay in the struggle. Political struggle has its own dynamic which feeds on the tensions present in the society—caste, communal, class, fear, greed. But Indian society also generates countervailing forces making for social equality, secularism, altruism. Politics in India adopts these values as its ideals and goals but draws upon the ties of caste and community for mobilising the people.

Moralistic solutions for political corruption, which reject outright appeals to the baser human motives, are unrealistic. Legal measures that ignore the psychological or political realities will prove self-defeating. The proposed law against political defection will only hamstring parliamentary government. Solutions to the problems of corruption in elections or politics generally must be not legal or abstractly moral, but political.

Political power is inherently biassed in favour of a given party, a given class, a given elite. There is fairness only within the limits of the bias, not outside it. Those who fight a party in power have to accept the unfair advantages it enjoys: these should be brought into the open rather than be hidden behind the facade of laws that are honoured in the breach. The limitations of statutory bodies such as the Election Commission should be analysed dispassionately.

But fairness within the limits of the status quo cannot be realised because all major political parties have vested interests. All of them have sources of funds, means of applying social pressure, even coercion, which they cannot give up for fear of losing whatever influence or power they enjoy. Their complaint is that some parties, such as the Congress, have inordinately greater access to resources, legitimate or illegitimate.

The complaint is not without substance. In the first place the danger is that lopsided use of unfair practices will pass beyond the endurance of the so-very tolerant Indian people and prove socially disruptive or demoralising. In the second place, the practical approach to controlling malpractices is 'honour among thieves'. It is inescapably the responsibility of political leaders to make the elections not too unfair. When some understanding is reached on this matter, however limited, it may provide the starting point for reform.

An election is a political process: its conduct is a matter of high political significance. No expert commission or non-political body can provide practicable solutions. Responsibility should be placed where it belongs—on parliament, on political parties, on their leaders.

Basic postulates

L, M. SINGHVI

THE electoral process and apparatus form an essential part of the design of a democratic constitution. In modern democracies, an electoral system is a determinant as well as a concomitant; it provides the institutional workshop for fashioning and moulding the instruments of power on the anvil of popular approval. A clean and fair election is the major premise of a democratic system.

A clean election is not merely the consequence of model legislation. It demands clean politics as a precondition. It postulates the broad adherence and undisputed acceptance of the basic canons of political health and hygiene.

The roots of electoral pollution lie deep in the soil of our political, public and business life. Electoral corruption is nursed by socio-economic conditions. It grows under the shadow of past habits and narrow perspectives. It flourishes because there are vast hoards of unaccounted money and idle wealth in our Politicization of the economy. electoral process and democratization of our politics may in the long run overcome the tendency towards electoral corruption, but has often, in the short run, led to the opposite results.

Perhaps, this is inevitable in a continental country like ours, full of heterogeneity and replete with deviant pressures seeking to deflect the course of our political development from its broad and generous purposes into narrow, self-seeking grooves. One can only hope that from under the miasma of electoral pollution will emerge the essential vigour and resilience of our democracy.

Long ago, William Cobbett described the British Constitution as 'Old Corruption'. It is instructive and edifying to know that it was only during the 19th and 20th centuries that Great Britain, the cradle

of modern parliamentary government, was able to emancipate itself from the tentacles of that Old Corruption. The following passage from Lord Brougham conjures a picturesque and entertaining portrait of the British franchise in the days of 'Old Corruption':

That a peer, or a speculating attorney, or a jobbing Jew, or a gambler from the Stock Exchange, by vesting in his own person the old walls of Sarum, or a few pigsties at Bletchingley, or a summer-house at Gatton, and making fictitious and collusive and momentary transfers of them to an agent or two, for the purpose of enabling them to vote as if they had the property of which they all the while knew they have not the very shadow, is in itself a monstrous abuse, in the form of a gross and barefaced cheat, and becomes the most disgusting hypocrisy when it is seriously treated as a franchise by virtue of property. I will tell these peers, attorneys, jobbers, loan contractors and the nabobs agents, if such there be still amongst us, that the time is come when these things can no longer be borne...'1

Britain has travelled far on the highway of democracy since the days of the 'Old Corruption', which was destroyed by the democratic thrust of that most potent of modern weapons in the armoury of politics, Public Opinion. Today, Great Britain has an outstanding electoral system, which is the envy and the inspiration of many other democracies. If this is so, it is not because their legislation is the most advanced nor because their norms are novel. As Sir Ivor Jennings sums it up.

"...Legislation and the courts merely tolled the bell, for Old

^{1.} G. T. Garratt, Lord Brougham, pp. 265

Corruption was already nearly Members of Parliament even more than other people depend for their reputation upon public opinion; and it is as worth while to be a member without reputation as it is to be a doctor of a university which sells degrees to all comers. Membership of Parliament has been prized because it gives a sense of power and confers prestige. The power of the private members went into a rapid decline as the control of parties became strict. In modern times the member can make a nuisance of himself, but he obtains no power unless he is invited to join the Cabinet. A member who had purchased a seat by corruption would have as little prestige as a knight who had obtained a baronetcy by purchase. Corruption at election is, however, not merely purchase; it is fraudulent and illegal. One of the merits of the Victorian era, due no doubt to its rather narrow conventions (for what is illegal is not necessarily immoral), was its condemnation of illegality. Bonus paterfamilias obeyed the laws with absolute rigidity. Hence a member or Parliament who acquired his seat illegally was not merely a doubtful character; he was a bit of a bounder, a cad, an outsider, the sort of man who could not be invited to take tea with one's daughters.'2

Perhaps, the most crucial factor conducive to a high standard of public life in England was the rise of an essentially bipartisan system and the attitude of the British who took politics in the same spirit as 'the boat race, a test match or the cup final. The better team ought to win but according to rules.'

Electoral corruption in India results from a combination of factors. We are caught up in a vicious circle of gigantic proportions. Electoral corruption is routine and commonplace. Unfortunately for us, more often than not, electoral corruption pays. And as long as it pays by rules of probability, no

amount of legal injunction will succeed in rooting it out. The moment it becomes a liability, it will begin swiftly to disappear.

The severity of electoral law obviously is not enough; what we need is a climate of opinion which would make the violations of the electoral law a matter of public shame and universal censure. The key to clean elections is, therefore, in the hands of the electorate and the leaders of public opinion, in the social context and in our mental attitudes.

Next to the 'ultimate matters' of our democratic enterprise who cheerfully suffer and enthusiastically sanction electoral malpractices, the most blameworthy are the politicians and political parties who have done relatively little to salvage the creative joy of politics from the throes of cynicism and despair. Often, though with some notable exceptions, the political struggle for power in our country follows outdated feudal patterns, making unscrupulous use of money, caste, religion and major force.

Let us be clear that these are not merely the consequences of economic under-development. Electoral corruption on the basis of money, caste, religion, undue influence or false propaganda arises because these factors are operationally efficacious, because sizeable segments of our electorate predictably respond to these factors and because electoral politics is inevitably sucked into the vortex of social and group psychology.

The most intractable issue of Indian electoral ecology relates to excessive election expenses far beyond the permissible statutory limits. The question of the sources of these funds is a part of the same issue. Partisan polemics apart, it is public knowledge that elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies entail a level of expenditure much larger than that permitted by law.

As the Joint Committee on Amendments to Election Law (January, 1972) put it: 'It is generally conceded that the statutory ceilings on election expenses are seldom observed in practice and the

actual expenditure incurred by a candidate does not bear any relation to the maximum limits laid down. More or less open admissions have been made of substantial sums of money being spent by (—) candidate (s). The law in this regard is clearly inadequate to counter the ingenuity of a candidate in circumventing its provisions successfully and with impunity.'

Dismissing an election appeal, the Supreme Court found it necessary to utter a grave warning which we can ignore only at our peril: 'But we cannot leave this appeal without expressing our uneasiness about the law relating to election expenses. Section 123(6) is by and large ineffective in controlling election expenses. There are ways to bypass that provision. From what we have seen in the various election cases that came before us we are of the opinion that (the) law controlling expenses has been reduced to a mockery. We can only repeat the observation of this Court in Rananjaya Singh's case (supra) that "the appeal in this connection must be to the Parliament".' Adverting to donations by an association of certain business houses, the Court said: '...one is constrained to feel that these payments were intended as investments. Possibly (...) did what other business concerns are doing. Such donations to political parties whether done in the crude way in which (...) did or in a more subtle way would undermine the very foundation of our society. No democracy can survive, however ideal is the Constitution by which it is governed, if the principles underlying the Constitution are ignored. The best democratic Constitution can go the way the Weimar Constitution went.'

The business houses are no longer permitted to make political donations but this has not made even a dent on the basic problem. Nor would it do to make the electoral law more stringent, while the electoral reality remains liberally permissive. Indeed, a law which cannot be enforced and is honoured only in its breach earns only public contempt, ridicule and disrepute.

The issue of election expenses is intimately interlinked with the

^{2.} Sir Ivor Jennings, Party Politics: Appeal to the People, 1969, p. 109.

prevailing economics of elections. Perhaps, we should work out a model of legitimate costs and then evaluate the existing law on the yardstick of such a model. We should also study the various ways in which the law is or can be circumvented. Perhaps, it would help to define such terms as 'election expenses', 'personal expenses' and 'unauthorised expenses'.

In their report on the Midterm Elections (1968-69), the Election Commission had recommended that there should be a new provision in the election law which would prohibit election expenses being incurred by any person other than the candidate or his election agent, unless authorised in writing by the candidate or his election agent or by any club, association, society, etc. The Joint Committee has recommended that an exception should also be made in relation to a political party which sets up a candidate or candidates at an election.

The net result of these proposals, even if adopted by Parliament, would be merely marginal because it is always possible to arrange for large sums of money to be spent through clubs, associations, societies and political parties and escape the legal liability for exceeding the permissible limits of election expenses. In order to streamline the scheme of the Act, it would be necessary to take a more drastic step.

What is required is a blanket and complete prohibition of election expenses by any person other than the candidate or his election agent, unless authorised in writing by the candidate or his election agent, clubbing of all expenses incurred or authorised by the candidate or his party or his agent, and a full disclosure of the sources of funds received and spent by parties and individual candidates for election expenses or otherwise.

Even such a drastic step, which would be open to challenge on the ground that it would impose pervasive restraint on the freedom and liberty of the citizens, may not achieve the desired objectives unless the social context of our elec-

toral contests and the attitudes of the electorate do not undergo a radical transformation.

In the ultimate analysis, as the Joint Committee put it candidly, 'the problem can be solved only it it is accepted in principle that all election expenses ought to be a legitimate charge on the public funds'. Some of the countries of the West have already experimented with the practical implementation of this essentially sound proposition.

A study of the implications of this proposition and the ways and means of implementing it should be urgently undertaken in our country, if merit and public-spirited dedication are not to remain muted and if money is to be stopped from talking as glibly and persuasively as it appears to have done in the past.

There are three basic categories of corruption practices: (1) those which are committed by the use of money such as bribery, excessive expenditure and conveyance of voters; (2) those which are committed by the use of force or power by abuse of political or official power such as undue influence, coercion, intimidation, violence, appeal to national symbols and the obtaining or procuring the assistance of government officials or the use of official machinery; (3) those which are committed by misleading propaganda, false allegations in relation to the personal character or conduct of a candidate, and by an appeal to sectional sentiments by spreading disaffection and en-mity among different classes of the citizens of India.

All the eight corrupt practices enumerated in section 123 of the Representation of the People Act 1951, fall into one of these three categories. This analytical categorisation is pointer to the need for curtailing and regulating the evil consequences of the abuse of money, power and force (including undue influence) and propaganda.

The basic cause of these abuses is the lack of political consciousness among the voters and the opinion-making elites in our country and the tendency of the political parties and individual aspirants to make unauthorised and unscrupulous use

of whatever advantage can be had at a given time. An effective code of conduct for political parties based on national consensus would go a long way in curbing some of the abuses.

A strong press and a conscious and discriminating public opinion could eradicate these evils to a large extent. What is needed is the enlightenment and education of our ultimate masters, the people of India. A massive programme of adult education for democracy and a substantial infusion of democracy and a substantial infusion of democratic content in our curricula would have a far-reaching pay-off potential. A statutory Council on Education for democracy with nation-wide functions and ample resources should be a high priority item on our national agenda.

The basic postulates of fair elections are:

- (1) an impartial and independent machinery for the conduct of elections:
- (2) a balanced and effective party system with a strong, articulate and responsible opposition providing an alternative to the government of the day;
- (3) a strong and unswerving commitment of political parties and candidates to the values underlying our electoral system and the legal and moral norms prescribed by it;
 - (4) a fearless press;
- (5) a strong and enlightened public opinion and an educated and intelligent electorate:
- (6) an efficient machinery for prevention, investigation and punishment of electoral offences and corrupt practices and
- (7) objective conditions in our social, economic and political life which would operate as contraceptives and disincentives to the commission of corrupt practices and electoral reforms.

These postulates provide a framework of aspirations as well as a practical programme of action. The realisation of these postulates will assuredly usher in a fairer electoral process and a mature and resilient democratic society.

A challenge

S. P. SEN VARMA

POLITICS is the art and practice of acquiring, and dealing with, the power of the most powerful of human associations, namely, the State. An election is the battle for gaining this power. A politician without love of power is a contradiction in terms. Power is the great deluder. Election is the pursuit of political power. Whoever is involved in this pursuit is, by the impulse of his lower nature, sometimes driven to adopt unfair tactics and foul means. Even the great Yudhishthira had to utter a half truth for gaining victory.

Then, again, by the innate structure of his nature, man has a tendency to see and magnify others' faults and defects and quite often behaves in an ostrich like manner and refuses to see and admit the reality of things. But power has a bright side also. As Dr. Finer says, power heightens sensitiveness, it stimulates the imagination of purposes and expedients; it gives incentives to men with power to do noble and great things beneficial to the community; it increases compassion when it places men where they can confront sorrow, which government exists to assuage and mitigate. It helps men to think, to choose, to endeavour towards the conquest of misery and discovery of truth. Without power the wicked could not be punished; without power justice would become sterile.

But, unless power is wedded to the moral sense, the sense of the good, then, power may cause havoc in men's lives by blinding their eyes against the light of reason and justice. This is why, since time immemorial, India has emphasised the union of power ('Shakti') with the sense of the good ('Shiva'). The Rig Veda in Shukta 83 of the first Mandal speaks of 'Bhadra Shakti', that is, power which is good and beneficial. In other words, power and justice, Shiva and Shakti, must be joined together if welfare of the individual and the community is to be obtained from the use of power.

I need not here deal in detail with each one of the eight corrupt practices specified in our election law. That will be beyond the scope of this article.

Having been in charge of the conduct and management of the largest number of elections during the short period of the last five years, the reality based upon facts and materials which have come into the possession of the Election Commission from all parts of the country seems to be that the various corrupt practices defined in our election law are by and large on the decline. Indirect but strong support is also lent to this view by the spread of the theory of 'rigging' during the last two or three years starting with the Presidential election of 1969.

The term 'rigging' is nowhere to be found in our election law. It

is not one of the eight specified corrupt practices. It is not even a term peculiar to elections. But, nonetheless, it is mentioned in the press, on the platform, in Parliament and in public and even in private gossip. Constant repetition has the great quality of imparting a semblance of truth even to an absurd and fantastic falsehood. To put it more correctly, the gullible and credulous public start believing it to be true. This is the notorious Goebbels method practised in Germany on a huge scale during the Nazi regime. If, however, you ask them what do they mean by 'rigging', what is the modus operandi in the practice of rigging, does rigging have only one form or is it like a chameleon that it may change its colour according to time and circumstances, I am sure very few even among the educated and sophisticated sections of the community will be able to answer these simple questions satisfactorily.

Then, if you ask those who are vociferous about it as to whether they have any personal knowledge or experience about rigging at elections, I am afraid a good many of them will not be able to say anything from personal knowledge and experience. Almost everything is based upon hearsay evidence received from workers of parties and candidates defeated at the polls and other interested persons. If you cross-examine them, many of them will not be able to give a good account before such cross-examination. A noted politician from a State told me about two years ago in a moment of sincere truth-'if I win. the election is free and fair; if I lose. the election is rigged.'

When people speak about rigging in an election, I think they generally mean that a corrupt practice has been indulged in at the election in a constituency or in a number of constituencies on a large scale in an organised and pre-planned manner with the active help, consent or connivance of the party in power, either acting singly or in collusion with the election machinery, including the Election Commission. I think 'rigging' is used in the press,

by the politicians and others in this sense.

In other words, the manner in which the expression is used clearly suggests that rigging means unscrupulous and underhand or fraudulent management and manipulation of elections by resort to corrupt practices or by the adoption of any unfair means in an organised manner by the governmental machinery or the election machinery, or by both acting jointly. The allegation made several days after the declaration of the results in the 1971 general elections to the Lok Sabha of chemical treatment of ballot papers and marking on the same the voting marks with a magic invisible ink in effectuation of a preplanned design hatched for the purpose, is an instance of allegation of rigging of elections.

At this stage I would not discuss in detail this fantastic, palpably absurd and mischievous story. A number of election petitions making this bogus allegation were filed in various High Courts, such as the Delhi High Court, the Mysore High Court, the Bombay High Court, the Allahabad High Court, etc. This allegation has been turned down by every High Court and even costs have been awarded to the Election Commission. I would not, therefore, like to deal with it now in any detail. By the operation of the inexorable law of historical inevitability it has been consigned to its proper place, namely, the dustbin of history.

This fantastic story apart, it can be asserted without hesitation that the fifth general election to the Lok Sabha in 1971 was better and cleaner than any previous general election. As a matter of fact there was a sense of joy and happiness in the Election Commission at that time; but, about a week or so thereafter some interested persons came out with this fantastic story. The figures and statistics which I propose to mention later on will lend support to the view that the fifth general election to the Lok Sabha in 1971 was fairer than any previous election. We cannot dismiss everything as a myth and a concoction.

Then, in the 1972 Assembly elections, allegation of rigging first

came from West Bengal. According to this allegation, rigging took the form of intimidation, coercion, and violence by organised gangs of goondas who, being set up by the ruling party in a pre-planned manner, attacked the polling stations with the help of the returning officers and their subordinates and other government officials and the polling personnel and, having scared away genuine voters marked the ballot papers themselves with the help of the polling staff.

In fairness to each of the political parties in West Bengal, it must be said that none of them blamed the Election Commission for any part of the alleged rigging. But, even then, the allegation was confined at first to about 18 assembly constituencies. Then the number was raised to 34 and 39, ultimately it went up to 200. But, as no election petition was filed, the truth or otherwise of this allegation could not be proved and the allegation remained an allegation pure and simple.

Because of the introduction of ballot papers with counterfoils, the voters without exception coming to the polling stations to cast their votes were required to put their signatures or thumb impressions on the counterfoils, and it would have been quite easy for the High Court to find out whether the allegations were true to any substantial extent so as to materially affect the result of the election. If, by a few election petitions, the elections, say in two, three or four assembly constituencies could have been proved to have been vitiated by rigging by organised intimidation and violence, then that would have lent some support to the story of general rigging in a large number of constituencies; and it would not have been difficult to locate the voters whose signatures or thumb impressions appeared or were purported to appear on the counterfoils. that has not been done.

Under these circumstances, it is difficult to accept the one-sided allegation of rigging. Goethe said—one man's word is no man's word, you

must hear both sides. It was noticed in the press that there was a talk of a non-official inquiry body or panel being appointed to go into the matter but such non-official inquiry body or panel would have no status under the law or the Constitution.

On the contrary, it would seem that any such step would have been unconstitutional in view of the clear language of Article 329(b) of the Constitution. With its non obstante clause, article 329(b) reads as Notwithstanding anyfollows: thing in this Constitution, no election to either House of Parliament or to the House or either House of the Legislature of a State shall be called in question except by an election petition presented to such authority (the High Court) and in such manner as may be provided for by or under any law made by the appropriate Legislature.'

Then, it has been stated in some quarters that this objection to the appointment of any non-official inquiry body or panel is a technical one. I would differ. This is a provision of the Constitution and an election once held and completed is a very important matter, which should not be interfered with unless the allegations have been proved to the hilt as in a criminal case. If this is regarded as a technical objection, then even the provisions in the regarding Constitution fundamental rights can at the convenience of persons concerned be termed as technical, but that would indeed be a dangerous and preposterous proposition.

In the next place, any non-official body or panel even if appointed would have to rely almost entirely on oral evidence because the important election documents, such as packets containing counterfoils of ballot papers, used ballot papers, unused ballot papers, marked copy of the electoral roll or any other important election paper would not be available for inspection to such body or panel because these election papers can be made available for inspection only under the order of a competent court, i.e., the High Court.

Any searching cross-examination of witnesses appearing before the

non-official body or panel in an orderly manner as in a court would not have been possible. Most of the witnesses would be likely to be biased. Further, such non-official inquiry after the lapse of so many months of the elections might have even led to a tense political situation by creating embittered feelings among the followers and supporters of the various political parties.

It may not be out of place to mention another point in this connection. There was no allegation of rigging in West Bengal at the time of the Lok Sabha General Election in March, 1971, i.e., just one year before the Assembly elections in March, 1972. The electorate, the election staff, police personnel, etc., by and large, remained practically the same in both elections. It does not appear readily acceptable to practical common sense that in the course of one year all of them in about 200 assembly constituencies out of a total of 280 resorted to or acquiesced in rigging by coercion, intimidation and violence in the assembly elections.

Long after the elections were over, allegations started being made that the election had been vitiated by rigging in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir also. About booth-capturing in Bihar, it may be pointed out that this menace has been in vogue in Bihar for quite some time, I understand, at least since the second general election of 1957. It has not developed suddenly in Bihar in 1971 and 1972.

The report of the fourth general elections of 1967 makes specific mention of adjournment of poll and of repoll in a number of polling stations in Bihar on account of 'serious disturbance or apprehended breach of the peace'. But who encouraged this sordid practice? Those who are conversant with the social, economic and political conditions of Bihar, know that economically, in spite of its vast natural resources, Bihar is a backward State, socially it is perhaps the most caste-ridden State in the whole of India and this bane of casteism has

vitiated in no mean degree the political atmosphere of the State also.

Politicians and their workers and supporters belonging mainly to a few dominant castes, to whatever party or parties they may belong, take a leading part in arranging or instigating booth-capturing by organised goondas and hoodlums in large numbers, with the result that in a good number of cases reports are received from the presiding officers and returning officers necessitating a repoll or fresh poll in the polling stations concerned.

Unless the politicians and political parties not only desist from indulging in or encouraging this nasty practice at elections but also openly denounce it in a united voice in unequivocal terms, no arrangement can eradicate this evil. But, if at the time of the election, people do not hesitate to throw away all norms of good conduct and decent behaviour, then it would become extremely difficult to eliminate this evil practice from our elections.

To stop this practice, the poll in Bihar has all along been staggered and spread (except in the mid-term election of 1969 when it was taken on a single day throughout the State) over a number of days. Even in the last assembly general elections in March, 1972, the poll was spread over as many as four days throughout the State with intervals of 2/3 days in between so that police personnel in a larger number might be employed on the day of the poll at each of the polling stations.

But, even then, booth-capturing could not be entirely avoided although it was on a much smaller scale this time as well as in 1971. Even then, the Commission had to order a repoll or fresh poll in at least a dozen cases because the presence of 2/3 police constables can do little to prevent a gang of 500 or more goondas armed with lethal weapons from attacking a polling station.

Lt is very easy to rouse feelings of hatred and enmity among the various sections of the people, most of whom are illiterate and steeped in centuries-old superstitions and blind traditions which more often than not even pass for religion.

These feelings of hatred and enmity among different castes and communities once raised are difficult to quench and assuage.

The famous historian, Lord Acton, in his History of Freedom, while dealing with 'Freedom in Antiquity' said: 'The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.' (p. 4) Those who indulge in or encourage these things are real enemies of the country because by their action they bring about disunity among the people and thwart the process of national integration.

There were a few cases, about 17 in number, of carrying away ballot boxes from polling stations in Kashmir and a repoll had to be taken in those cases. In Jammu and Kashmir, on all accounts, the election this time has been very fair. This has been acclaimed in the press and by many public men and politicians in the Kashmir valley. A good number of candidates not belonging to the ruling party have been returned. In Madhya Pradesh, there was no adjourned poll or repoll at all.

I do not say that elections in this country have become absolutely free from corruption. But there are good reasons for the view that they are freer and fairer than before. And, perhaps, precisely for this reason, one now hears about the new theory of rigging. If the number of election petitions is any indication—as it is in Great Britain—then, this view gets support from such number as shown by the table below.

TABLE I—Lok Sabha

1952		39
1957		59
1962	***	46
1967		51
1971		58
	1957 1962 1967	1957 1962 1967

Of the 58 election petitions filed after the 1971 general elections to the Lok Sabha, 44 have been disposed of so far. Out of these 44 cases, only one case has been allowed on legal grounds, that is, that a non-scheduled tribe woman

becomes a scheduled tribe woman on her marriage with a scheduled tribe man. This was Jehanara Jaipal Singh's case. All the other 43 cases have been dismissed. Among these cases, in 10 cases allegations of chemical treatment were made. All these allegations have been dismissed; in 8 cases allegations of corrupt practices were made which were all dismissed and in 19 cases the new counting procedure was challenged and all these challenges were dismissed.

Then, in the same year (1971) a total of 35 election petitions were filed in connection with the elections to Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal legislative assemblies -8 petitions in Orissa, 18 in Tamil Nadu and 9 in West Bengal. 21 cases have been disposed of so far. Allegations of corrupt practices were made in 11 petitions which have all been dismissed and the new counting procedure was challenged in 18 petitions which have all been dismissed. Only one petition has been allowed on a recount of the votes. The remaining 20 petitions have been dismissed.

Prom the above analysis the election petitions filed in 1971 and disposed off so far, the clear indication is that our elections are gradually becoming cleaner and fairer. Then the following table shows the number of election petitions filed in connection with the assembly elections in the several general elections. (See Table II.)

After the second general election of 1957, 3 elections to the House of the People and 45 elections to the State legislative assemblies, making a total of 48, were set aside. Of these 48 elections which were set aside, 2 elections to the House of the People and 20 elections to the State legislative assemblies were set

TABLE II

	Legislative	Assemblies	
1.	1952		286
2.	1957	•••	413
3.	1962	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	309
4.	1967	•••	345
5.	1972	•••	243

aside on the grounds of corrupt practices.

After the third general election of 1962, 5 elections to the House of the People and 27 elections to the State Legislative Assemblies, making a total of 32, were set aside, out of these, 3 elections to the House of the People and 12 elections to the State Legislative Assemblies were set aside on the grounds of corrupt practices.

After the fourth general election of 1967, 2 elections to the House of the People and 43 elections to the State Legislative Assemblies. making a total of 45, were set aside; out of these, one election to the House of the People and 17 elections to the State Legislative Assemblies were set aside on the grounds of corrupt practices. The results of the election petitions challenging the assembly elections after the fifth general election of 1972, are not yet available.

Thus, from the figures relating to election petitions it cannot be said that elections have become less free and more unclean. In Great Britain, there has not been a single election petition on the allegation of corrupt practice since the year 1911. Therefore, it is claimed that corrupt practices have been completely eliminated from British elections. Those who make the novel allegation of rigging fully know this and therefore they have started speaking about it and not so much about individual corrupt practices as in the previous general elections between 1952-1967.

Then, if the number of complaints received during the parliamentary elections in 1971 and the assembly elections in 1972 be an indication, then the clear indication is that elections have not become that unclean as some people try to make them appear. On the contrary, information based upon documentary evidence available with the Commission indicates that individual corrupt practices are on the decline.

Formerly, during the period of elections, including the day of the poll, complaints in the shape of letters and telegrams used to be received in the Election Commis-

sion at the time of every general election in thousands and thousands, so much so that they had to be kept in gunny bags. But at the time of the Lok Sabha elections in 1971, the total number of complaints from the entire country was 2092 only and at the time of the assembly elections in 1972 the total number was still less—it was only 1433.

These complaints have been classified in the Commission's secretariat under the following broad heads.

- 1. Omission of names from and inclusion of bogus entries in the electoral rolls.
- 2. Transfer of officers on the eve of elections.
- 3. Participation by government employees in elections.
- 4. Abuse of government machinery by ministers, etc.
- 5. Partisan attitude of government officers employed on election duty.
- 6. Printing and publishing of objectionable posters, pamphlets, etc.
- 7. Intimidation and coercion of voters at polling stations, etc.
 - 8. Impersonation of voters.
- Disturbances at meetings, etc., and maintenance of law and order.
- 10. Complaints of other miscellaneous character.

Therefore, from the number of complaints and the nature thereof also one will not be justified in coming to the conclusion that our elections are becoming more unfair and unclean.

Then, how can we expect that only one aspect of our social and political life and activity, that is, that relating to elections will be absolutely and totally corruption-free when the whole country in every sphere and department of life and activity is plunged in the stagnant ocean of corruption? Remove corruption in general and corruption in elections will be a thing of the past. But who will remove corruption?

There are always two parties to corruption. Those who corrupt

and those who get corrupted. Those who corrupt being the active agents of corruption, because they are socially and economically strong, are more to blame than those who submit to corruption because they are the passive agents, they are socially and economically the weaker sections of the community.

Even a majority of the so-called anti-social elements have turned anti-social because they are economically very poor and therefore socially weak. Those who submit to corruption are used as means and as tools of those who corrupt for achieving their ends.

Therefore, the principal responsibility lies upon those who corrupt, to desist from corruption.

I think that the basic remedy lies in the amelioration of the socioeconomic conditions of the electorate. A vast majority of the people still live below the poverty line. Many of them are steeped in brutalizing poverty. With the improvement in the economic lot of the masses of the electorate, many of them will desist from taking bribes, or resorting to undue influence or intimidation or violence with all their attendant risks and They will refuse to be dangers. treated as tools in the hands of other persons.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the vital questions of criminology as to why people commit crimes. But it seems certain that if anti-socials find gainful employment, many of them will become useful members of society and will not indulge in corruption at the instigation of other.

The anti-social of our society whom we spurn and detest as a confirmed criminal pathetically cries out like Frankenstein's monster in Mary Shelley's never-to beforgotten story 'Frankenstein or a Modern Prometheus': 'I am malicious because I am miserable. . . Everywhere I see bliss from which I am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good, misery made me a fiend. Make me happy and I shall again be virtuous.' This is the crux of the problem. Remove

poverty of the masses in villages, towns and cities and corruption in elections will dwindle to vanishing point.

In the second place, the dissemination of liberal views and ideas among the masses throughout the length and breadth of the country will enable them to free themselves from the shackles of casteism, communalism, religious fanaticism; mass media can do a lot in this direction.

In the third place, the real defects in the law should be removed by suitable amendments. I made a number of recommendations in this behalf in the Report on the Mid-term General Elections of 1968-69. I find to my dismay that the Joint Committee of Parliament has not even discussed some of those important recommendations which would have definitely helped reduce substantially, if not eliminate altogether, a number of major corrupt practices from our elections. For example, I recommended that one of the grounds for declaring an election void should be the prevalence of any corrupt practice on an extensive scale in an election. such a provision is included in section 100 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, then the allegation to rigging can be tackled with a fair measure of success. This was recommendation no. 23 in the Report.

I also made extensive recommendations regarding the filing of accounts of election expenses incurred by political parties in the conduct and management of the elections. I also made recommendations in respect of many other things of great practical importance which if accepted even now would go a long way in making our elections corruption-free.

But, we should remember that the legal remedies which we may recommend and adopt for the elimination, so far as possible, of corrupt practices from our elections should be practical and pragmatic, otherwise the fear is that such remedies may remain dead letters in our laws and statutes. In the life of men and society there are some things which law is incapable of doing and others which it ought not to attempt. If in our overenthusiasm we lose our sense of proportion and pragmatism, then the result will be either something which will not be workable in practice at all or something to avoid which human nature will try to adopt all sorts of subterfuges.

Therefore, any proposal like the banning of public meetings during election time would not be possible in practice and the law should not try its hand at it. I have not come across any provision in the laws of any country in the world where democracy prevails that election meetings are not allowed to be held during election time.

In the law relating to parliamentary elections in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), there are provisions that 'No person shall at any time during the period commencing on the date of nomination at any election in any electoral district and ending on the day immediately following the day on which the poll is taken at such election, conduct, hold or take part in any procession other than a procession on May 1, in any year, or in a procession for religious or social purposes.' But public meetings are not banned.

The reason for not banning public meetings during election time is clear. Public discussions during election time are necessary to educate the electorate about he principal issues in the election.

Then, the moral aspect of the matter must not be lost sight of. Unless the moral tone and standard of the community can be raised, we cannot expect our elections to be totally free from corruption. In this connection, parties and candidates and politicians should do well to remember that apart from all moral considerations, even considerations of pure self-interest suggest that corrupt practices in elections should be eliminated.

Newton's Third Law of Motion would appear applicable here also. Every action has its equal and opposite reaction. If you try to win election by bribery, by force, by intimidation or violence or by stirring narrow sentiments of caste,

community, religion or by abuse of official machinery, then your opponents also will try as far as possible to do the same either in that election or in any subsequent election and pay you back in your own coin and thereby neutralise your action. If you bribe voters, then every other party will also be inclined to do so. If you take recourse to violence, you will thereby incite others to practise the same thing. This will thus start a vicious ring of competition among political parties to do evil things.

In this competition, whichever party is stronger or more resourceful for the time being may obtain the desired results but ultimately it will bring about ruination of all those who indulge in these activities, because by evil means and methods, no lasting good to the community can be brought about. At least that is not the lesson of history. Thus, even from the standpoint of self-interest, the parties, candidates and others should desist from resorting to evil and corrupt practices in elections.

Therefore, leaders and representatives of all the important political parties should sit together and take a vow not to have recourse to, or encourage, foul means or corrupt practices and methods in elections. In Great Britain this actually happened with the result that since the year 1911 there has not been a single election petition on the ground of corrupt practices. In this elimination of corrupt practices, a number of members of the House of Commons-high-souled people indeedplayed a noble role even at the sacrifice of their personal interests.

In this connection, Cornelius O'Leary concludes his book, Elimination of Corrupt Practices in British Elections 1868-1911, with the following words. 'When all is said, however, it was the members of the House of Commons who from first to last set the moral tone, unprompted by outside pressure groups. At the cost of personal sacrifice to some of its members, Parliament managed within one generation to sweep away traditions that were centuries old and were regarded by many as wellnigh ineradicable. It is an achievement of

which any legislature might well be proud.'

Members of our Parliament and State Legislatures should do well to emulate this noble example set by their counterparts in the United Kingdom.

Then, there is an effective political remedy. This relates to the polarisation of parties. If opposition parties could merge themselves into one single political party by adopting common aims and objects, policies and programmes, then that would be of immense benefit to the effective functioning of democracy in our country.

Several opportunities came in the past in this respect from Bihar, Punjab, Utar Pradesh and West Bengal on a number of occasions—after the 1967 general elections and the 1969 mid-term general elections and on subsequent occasions, too, when coalitions or United Front Governments were formed but these governments were short-lived because of the internal differences and struggles among the coalition partners.

Opportunities also came on the national plane after the split in the Indian National Congress which started over the choice of the Presidential candidate in the middle of 1969. The opposition parties did not avail themselves of these opportunities due to nobody's fault except their own.

Even now the opposition parties may give serious thought to the question of polarisation and formation of one single strong opposition party. I believe polarisation in our political sphere is bound to come today or tomorrow. Emerson said, this is a world of polarity. Therefore, I feel that the inherent forces of political circumstances will compel the opposition parties to group together and form one strong party.

In Great Britain, even immediately before the passing of the Great Reform Bill of 1832, the picture of the House of Commons was one of a House split into a number of loose groupings and factions. After the election of July-August, 1830, the Treasury List of 656 M.Ps., out of a total membership in the House of Commons of 658,

was divided under the following heads.

*			
	Friends	•••	311
2.	Moderate Ultras		37
3.	Doubtful favourable	• • •	37
4.	Very doubtful	•••	24
5.	Foes		188
	Violent Ultras		25
	Doubtful unfavourable		23
8.	The Huskisson Party		11

To me it seems that a veiled tendency to polarisation has already started. The sooner it comes into the open, the better.

Lastly, a few words about the change in the electoral system. Some parties are now advocating the introduction of the list system of voting which is one of the forms of the system of proportional representation in place of the present plurality or the simple majority system of voting in single member constituencies. This is not the place to deal with this matter in detail.

It may be stated that one variety of the proportional representation system, namely, the single transferable vote system is already in vogue in our country in smaller elections to the offices of the President and the Vice-President of India, in elections to the Rajya Sabha and in elections to the Legislative Councils of the States having such Councils. The demand now is for another variety of the P.R. system, namely, the list system in elections to the House of the People and legislative assemblies.

Any system of voting, whether the present plurality system of voting or the proposed list system of voting or any other variety of the P.R. system, cannot be termed good or bad in the abstract, that is to say, cannot be regarded as either intrinsically and inherently good or intrinsically and inherently bad. The system which might have worked well in one country under one set of political conditions and circumstances may prove to be quite unworkable and therefore not acceptable in different countries and

in different political conditions and circumstances.

The reason is simple. Politics like mathematics is not an a priori science. It is an empirical study. Therefore, the value and utility of any political institution or system will depend upon the conditions, circumstances, attitude of the people, the liking which the people have developed for the insutution and the system because of its long continued existence in their midst and its overall effect upon the social, political and economic institutions which they serve.

The present plurality system of voting, i.e., relative majority but not necessarily an absolute majority in single member constituencies has been in vogue in our elections by and large since the first general elections of 1951-52. There had been a few double member constituencies but they were abolished in 1961 and since then all parliamentary and assembly constituencies in our country have been single member constituencies.

Even before the adoption of the Constitution, this plurality system of voting was in vogue in the elections in our country with limited franchise. The people of this country have been accustomed to this system. Therefore, before we discard this system for the list system of voting or any other variety of the P.R. system, we must carefully consider all aspects of the matter.

India is a vast country with a population of over 547 millions and an electorate in the neighbourhood of about 300 millions. First of all we should consider whether the list system would be properly workable in this vast country. A peculiar thing to be noticed about the list system or any other form of P.R. system is that it is not in vogue in any big country of the world.

In France it was discarded when the Constitution of the Fifth Republic was adopted in 1958. Since then the plurality system of voting with the second ballot has been in vogue in France. The list system was in vogue in the Weimar Republic of Germany in elections to the Reichstag from 1919 to 1933 and it has been stated by several high authorities that it was one of the principal

factors responsible for the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the emergence of Hitler and his Nazi party to power.*

The Federal Republic of Germany has now instituted two major innovations. In the first place, a party is excluded from all representation if it fails to receive a specified percentage of the total vote. Obviously such a provision deals a death blow to smaller splinter groups.

In the second place, the electoral system, while excluding the smaller parties as above, seeks to combine the plurality (relative majority) system and the P.R. system by providing that half of the representatives are to be elected by plurality, i.e., relative majority, and the other half on the basis of party lists put forward by each party in each land. Thus, the list system has been discarded in respect of one-half of the elections. There is already a growing feeling that this hybrid system should be abandoned in favour of the British single-member constituencies.

In a number of small European countries, such as Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian Kingdoms of Sweden, Norway and Denmark and the Irish Republic, the P.R. system in one or the other of its varieties is in vogue. This is not the place to deal with it in detail but in no big country in the world, has the P.R. system been adopted in elections to the Lower Chambers of the legislatures. The Commonwealth of Australia has not adopted it although it has been in vogue in one of its component units, namely, Tasmania, for a long time.

John Stuart Mill who was an ardent advocate of the P.R. system supported it on grounds of reason and justice. But Walter Bagehot, another eminent Englishman of ability, insight and experience and author of the famous book, *The*

^{*}This started with the 1930-September elections. See the interesting analysis made by Karl J. Newman in his book, European Democracy between the Wars (pp. 87-88) in this connection. The process was completed with the elections of 1933. See in this connection Richard Grunberger's book A Social History of the Third Reich. After the second world war, the Federal Republic of Germany discarded the list system of the Weimar days.

English Constitution, opposed it with equal force having regard to the functioning of Parliament. Another British political writer, Henry Sidgwick, in his book, The Elements of Politics, expressed himself strongly against the P.R. system. In France, Esmein, a noted writer and publicist foresaw that P.R. would lead to chaos and anarchy.

In recent years, eminent writers like Ernest Barker, Harold Laskl, Herman Finer and others have expressed themselves in strong terms against the P.R. system in any of its varieties or forms.

The advocates of the P.R. system support it principally on two or three grounds, namely, the proper representation of the minorities, promise of breaking of corrupt party machines, and elimination of evils like gerrymandering in delimitation of constituencies. As regards the representation of minority groups in a constituency, one should remember what Dr. Finer said, namely: 'The horizon of a minority is not limited by the boundaries of a constituency.'

As regard the breaking up of corrupt machines, Carl. J. Friedrich of Harvard University in his book, Constitutional Government and Democracy, says on page 305 There can be no question that P. R. starts out by doing this quite effectively. But after the machine politicians have caught their breath, they are quite skillful in "taking over" proportional representation. Since proportional representation in the long run strengthens, rather than weakens, party, and that means machine control, the bosses return with another rampart added to their fortress. Some cities have tried it, and the results are not encouraging.'

He quoted the opinion of an experienced American (Newton D. Baker) about his experiments: 'We have groups of all sorts and kinds, formed around religious, racial, language, social and other contentious distinctions. The proportional representation invites these groups to seek to harden and intensify their differences by bringing them into political action where they are irrelevant, if not disturbing. A wise election system would in-

vite them to forget these distracting prejudices.'

So far as the evils like gerrymandering in delimitation of constituencies are concerned, as the constituencies will be very large in extent and area, these evils are no doubt reduced. But, in India, gerrymandering in the delimitation of constituencies hardly exists as delimitation is done by an independent Delimitation Commission according to clear principles and guide lines laid down in law by Parliament.

The principal defects which are characteristic of proportional representation are fragmentation and multiplication of parties, difficulty in forming of government, and Cabinet instability and its extreme complexity in actual working. Some of these defects appear from time to time even under the majority vote system, specially in new democracies in some of the developing countries of Asia and Africa. But these defects are generally present in countries where the P.R. system has been in vogue. We should not forget that on paper the P.R. system may appear neater and cleaner because it seems to function with mathematical accuracy but affairs of human life are not conducted in accordance with some set formulae of mathematics or abstract rules of pure reason.

After giving the matter some serious thought, the principal defects of the list system appear to me to be as follows.

- Multiplicity of political parties without any party having an absolute majority in the legislature and consequent attempts to form a coalition government. A coalition government is unstable government. It cannot last long because of its inherent weaknesses.
- 2) That in its turn leads to an enormous increase in the power of the bureaucracy and to frequent elections at short intervals which tend to exasperate the electorate and they lose interest in politics and elections. It may even lead to the emergence of dictatorship as in fascist Italy or Nazi Germany.
- (3) Multi-member large constitu-

encies and long lists of candidates produced by contesting parties destroy the direct relationship between individual candidates and voters. At the next delimitation in this country the average population of a single-member parliamentary constituency will in any case be more than one million. If the constituencies are multi-member constituencies. as they will have to be under the list system, then in a multimember constituency having, say, at least five members to elect, the average population will be more than five millions and the electorate will be about three millions. How this will work in a vast country like India, it is not easy to imagine.

- (4) The list system may be regarded as unconstitutional as infringing the provisions of article 81 and article 170 of the Constitution of India-which provide for the election of members of the House of the People and of State Legislative Assemblies by direct election from territorial constituencies. But when voters are asked to choose one of the several lists, the element of directness of election at once seems to vanish; voters will not vote directly for individual candidates, they will vote only for the lists. On this ground alone, the proposal is liable to be rejected.
- (5) Even scrutiny of nomination papers will be a difficult job. Not only will an unduly long time be taken by the returning officers for scrutiny, but what will happen to a list if one or two or more out of several candidates in the list are found disqualified,—will the whole list be rejected or only the names of those found disqualified or not qualified, be omitted from the list and new names substituted in their As this may entail place? more time, the entire timetable of election may be upset.
- (6) There will be an enormous increase in the powers of the

central party organizers and bosses leading to the emergence of bossism in politics which is extremely baneful for the growth of healthy democratic institutions,

- (7) It may lead even to national disintegration. As Dr. Finer in his book, The Theory and Practice of Modern Government, observes on page 557 'A human tendency may be either promoted or counteracted by an institution. And the separatist mentality is promoted by the automatic list system and counteracted by the single-member majority system.'
- (8) The system is extremely complex. We have seen that even in elections on a small scale under the single transferable vote system such as the Presidential election, voters who are elected members of the Houses Parliament and elected members of the State Legisla-Assemblies sometimes spoil ballot papers in indicating their preferences, and demand fresh ballot papers. I came across such a case in the Presidential election of August, 1969 when polling was going in Parliament House. One cannot even imagine what will happen to the ordinary voter in a multi-member constituency which will have an electorate of about three mil-We should not forget that even now about 70 per cent of the people and therefore of the electorate are illiterate. Chaos and confusion are bound to follow at the time of the poll and counting. One even shudders at the chaos and confusion which will follow on the polling day at the various polling stations among the voters and polling personnel. Counting too will also be extremely difficult. in hundreds are Mistakes bound to be committed in the process of counting.

Then, we should bear in mind that the object of a general election in a parliamentary democracy is

not only to constitute a new legislature out also to form a new government. As Laski and other writers have said,—it is not likely that the difficulties and problems of the modern state are such as to be at all seriously remediable by retorms of the electoral machinery. Mainly, those difficulties and problems are moral in character. We shall meet them rather by the elevation of the popular standard of intelligence and the retorm of the economic system than by making men choose and elect in proportion to the neatly graded volume of opinion.

Laski says that the P.R. system where it has been tried has not noticeably improved the standards of public life. Laski concludes 'A State divided into equal electoral districts, each returning one single members to the Legislative Assembly seems therefore to be the general lesson of historic experience.'

I conclude this topic with what has been stated by a recent German writer (Karl J. Newman) in his book, European Democracy between the Wars (1970), page 88—'On the pretext of preventing a "tyranny of the majority" and protecting the political minority the advocates of proportional representation are really thinking more of the narrower interests of their own group. Once, however, such minority becomes a majority, it is no longer interested in the proportional representation.'

Upon all these considerations the clear conclusion seems to be that the list system or any other variety of proportional representation will not be the proper electoral system for India to adopt.

The above survey and analysis will tend to show that the picture of elections in this country is not so dark and dismal as some prophets of doom try to show it to be; on the contrary, the picture is by and large one of elections gradually becoming cleaner and fairer, the existence of dark patches and pockets here and there notwithstanding. This gradual improvement in the situation seems to have led to

the putting forward of the theory of total manipulation of elections by those in power on an organised scale and in a pre-planned manner—called by the alluring name of 'rigging' as if election in this country cannot be fair and free.

The upholders of this theory totally forget and ignore the hard fact which Swami Vivekananda used to stress quite often that the moral sense of the ordinary people of this country though steeped in poverty and misery could not but evoke admiration and respect. This holds good to a considerable extent even now. A little improvement in their economic lot and a sincere approach towards them on a footing of equality can work wonders and bring out the best in them. I make bold to say this from my personal experience.

Lut this is not to say that our elections have become corruptionfree. Corruption is still there. The basic remedies for its removal are socio-economic, moral and political and pari passu some legal remedies are also necessary. But this much seems certain that no amount of reform in the method and system of election and no enlargement of the Election Commission will even touch the fringe of the problem. On the contrary, each will create new difficulties and problems which will be difficult to remedy thereafter. Above all, what is necessary is concerted and sincere action by those involved in the process—the electorate, the parties, the candidates, their workers and supporters, and the entire election machinery and the governmental machinery.

If all these agencies join together with a firm determination to remove and eliminate corruption from our elections, then success can be achieved in spite of the fact that the entire atmosphere we live in is now surcharged with corruption. This is indeed a difficult task but the destiny of man is not to submit to obstacles and difficulties but to overcome them so as to have a final view and glimpse of life. History does not show that man has ever been able to achieve reality in any sphere of life by trailing the path of ease and least resistance.

The first reform

E. M. S. NAMBOODIRIPAD

BEGINNING with the first general election of 1954, India has seen five elections to Parliament; most of the States too had five elections to their State Legislatures. Some States like Kerala, Orissa and West Bengal have had more elections to the State Legislatures.

In none of the five elections to Parliament did Congress win a majority of votes. Every Congress Government, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi, was a minority government in the sense that, although it had a majority inside Parliament, that majority represented a minority of the electorate in the country.

The position was the same in State Legislatures except in one or two in 1952 and a slightly greater number in 1972. Furthermore, in

some State Legislatures like those of Travancore/Cochin, Madras and Pepsu in 1952, once again in Travancore-Cochin in 1954, in Kerala and in Orissa in 1957, once again in Kerala in 1965, in 9 States in 1967, in the four States where mid-term elections were held in 1969, and finally in West Bengal in 1971, the Congress was reduced to a minority even in terms of the number of seats in the legislatures.

Despite this minority character of all the Central Governments and of some of the State Governments formed by the Congress, however, the Congress managed to maintain its position as the one party capable of forming governments. Before 1967, it could resort to various manoeuvres, keep other parties which had secured a majority of

seats in the Legislature out of the government, or in the rare cases in which this was not possible (as in Kerala in 1957), it did not hesitate to adopt the most unconstitutional methods to topple the non-Congress Government. After 1967, too, every single non-Congress Government that was formed anywhere in the country was toppled by a combination of manoeuvres which substantiates the old adage 'Everything is fair in love and war'.

This being the attitude adopted by the dominant political party in the country which is in control of the entire administrative apparatus of the country, is it not utopian to dream of clean elections in this country? How can the election be 'clean' when the ruling party is determined at all costs to topple any government which is formed in any State by any other party? Is it not natural for such a party to so devise every election that its 'majority' is assured?

West Bengal is a case in point. Leaders of the ruling party are fond of talking of the 'magnificent victory' of the Congress and the 'utter rout' of the Marxist-led opposition. Not even the strongest defenders of the Congress in West Bengal, however, would deny that the most shameless use of terror and rigging did take place in some constitu-Their only complaint against the opposition is that the latter is 'attributing this terror and rigging to the entire State.'! The contrast between voting figures in the traditionally Left strongholds (where terror and rigging has taken place in a shameless manner) and those in Congress strongholds (where there was no need for such shameless use of terror and rigging) is so remarkable that any impartial observer would come to the conclusion that there is something in the charge of terror and rigging in the West Bengal election.

The same conclusion emerges from a comparison of the trend of voting in West Bengal (where there was reasonable fear that the Congress might lose) and in the rest of the country. While in the latter the Congress vote registered either moderate increases or significant falls when compared to the voting in 1971,

the trend of voting in West Bengal was unprecedentedly in favour of the Congress.

yoti Basu points out in his pamphlet, Subversion of Parliamentary Democracy in West Bengal,

'The Congress rulers stoutly deny that there has been any rigging, that the CPI (M) vote had fallen only by three per cent which is nothing abnormal and the increase in the Congress vote is due to the "Indira Wave" and the Bangladesh This is all humbug. The victory. "Indira Wave" was at its highest at the time of the election in March 1971. But then that wave had not touched the West Bengal shores. In that election the Congress vote had slumped to the all-time low of 2%. This despite the fact that there was no Left and Democratic unity to fight the Congress. The "Indira Wave" is not rolling so high even in the other States swept by it in 1971. From 1971 to 1972, the Congress vote has come down from 55 to 52 per cent in Andhra Pradesh. from 63.8 to 56.62 per cent in Maharashtra, from 53 to 46.9 per cent in Haryana, from 71 to 53 per cent in Mysore, from 64 to 48 per cent in Delhi. While thus the "Indira Wave" is receding all over the country after riding high in 1971, in West Bengal which stemmed the wave in 1971, it is alleged to have begun riding high suddenly in 1972 when Left and democratic unity had been reforged to fight the Congress, with the Congress vote amazingly increasing from 27.3 per cent in 1971 to 49.4 per cent in 1972. Who do the Congress leaders think are naive enough to believe this wave theory of theirs?

'As for the victory in Bangladesh, it was the Left parties which had campaigned amongst the people in support of the Bangladesh freedom struggle while the Congress was keeping quiet. If there is any swing because of this issue it should be in favour of the Left. Again, how can the Congress leaders claim that the Bangladesh victory gave them votes in West Bengal while in adjacent Assam, another State bordering Bangladesh where hundreds of thousands of evacuees had taken shelter, the Congress vote

came down from 57 per cent in 1971 to 53 per cent in 1972.

'No, all this political swing theory cannot explain the increase in Congress vote. If there is any political swing it is in favour of the Left and Democratic forces who have reforged their unity. In fact the Congress alarmed at its dismal prospects took recourse to terroristic and fraudulent methods.

Not any theory of political swing but the total and unashamed rigging of the whole election can explain this tremendous increase in the Congress vote. It is with this rigging that the Congress has succeeded in its aim of preventing the Left Front from winning a majority or even entering the Assembly in sizable force.

'The election results confirm this.

'The phenomenal decrease in Left votes in the 51 constituencies mentioned above do not prove any "swing"; they only confirm the Leftist charge of rigging and gangsterism. Here we cite only three instances to illustrate the point. In Kalna the Leftist vote is recorded as having decreased from 31,890 in 1971 to 929 only in this election a year later; in Nadanghat the decrease is from 34,288 to 2,621; and in Manteswar the Left vote fell from 29,750 to 5.149. This by itself constitutes a damning evidence of the large-scale rigging and gangster operations that have already been described.' (Pp. 30-31)

Jyoti Basu then goes on to another 'equally bankrupt theory' according to which, 'although the Lefists retained their votes by and large or even increased their votes in quite a number of constituencies and therefore one cannot speak of a "swing", yet the Congress (R) was able to mobilize a very large number of "new" voters, voters who generally remain inert and had never exercised their franchise on any previous occasion; these voters, according to this theory, voted en bloc in favour of the Congress (R) this one time in their life. This theory, these apologists feel, is required also to explain the incredibly heavy polling in polling stations occupied by the Congress (R)-CPI combine; such stations, almost invariably show 80% to 90% polling, while the general average varies from 50% to 60% at the most; the picture becomes truly fantastic when one looks at the voting figure for Baranagar and Dum Dum, for example; in Baranagar, as a result of the occupation of 100 polling stations by the Congress (R)-CPI gangs the total number of ballot papers used as votes rose to 86% of the total electorate; in Dum Dum the corresponding figure was 79.7%—these are all-India records.

'(a) This theory also finds no support from evidence. Had this been true, such 'activization of inert voters or mobilization of new voters should have been most perceptible in areas where the Congress (R)-CPI combine could exert their maximum influence. Midnapore District is obviously such an area, being a traditional strong-hold of Congress (R)-CP1-Ajoy Mukheriee combination. As has already been stated, in at least 15 constituencies in this District the Congress alliance suffered a decline in the number of votes and the Left votes increased. But, what is more, the total votes polled also There was neither a decreased. "swing" nor any sudden urge on the part of the "inert voters" or "new voters" to cast their votes. (b) The inventors of this theory have to explain why this sudden "activization of inert voters or new voters" took place only in those constituencies which were Leftist strongholds but were occupied by the Congress (R) with police support; and, moreover, they have to explain, why in even these constituencies there was no general pattern of "activization", but only the polling stations under occupation on the polling day showed the fantastic polling of 80% or more of the electorate. The ghostly inert voters, who presumably appeared from nowhere as a result of the Indira-Wave, must have been gifted with supernatural powers too, for in most of these polling-stations the greater bulk of the "votes" were cast in two or three hours' time.' (Pp 33-34.)

yoti Basu also disposed of another argument—the one advanced by no less a person than Chief Minister Siddhartha Sankar Ray, who, as reported in *The Statesman* of Calcutta on 29th March, 'told a press conference that the CPI (M) allegation that election had been rigged was totally unfounded, "even on the basis of pure arithmetic" (quotation marks in *The Statesman*), because the party had secured nearly 29% of the votes this time, as against nearly 32% in the 1971 elections. It had received only 3% less votes. If elections were rigged this would not have been possible. On the other hand, his party had gained 3% votes.'

Basu's answer is, 'Sri Ray appears to claim that rigging could be suspected only if the CPI(M) vote had been reduced to zero. In so far as the objective of any rigging is merely to ensure the "victory" of the ruling party's candidates in a majority of constituencies, no rigging expert would ever go to the extent of making the opposition vote disappear altogether. As it overshot their mark, and by overis, the Congress (R) "experts" fulfilling their target, have thoroughly exposed themselves in the eyes of the people. Even according to Sri Ray's mode of "reasoning", he has to explain how the CPI(M) vote was reduced to 2% at Kalna, to less than 5% at Nadanghat, to less than 10% at Manteswar, to less than 12% at Dum Dum constituencies which the CPI(M) won by very large majorities in 1971. Would he agree that there is some basis for the Leftist charge of rigging in these constituencies, for example, and therefore, the allegation is not "totally unfounded"?

But this is not the whole of this remarkable performance in "pure arithmetic". Sri Ray is reported to have said further, "The reason that made a big difference in the number of seats won was that there was little opposition this time from the Congress (O), Bangla Congress, Forward Bloc, Muslim League, the PSP, the SSP, Gorkha League and the Lok Sevak Sangha. We got all their seats and if you add their seats up with ours, you will see why we got the number that we have got. " (The Statesman, Calcutta.

got..'" (The Statesman, Calcutta, 29th March; the quotation mark within the report is in the newspaper.)

'The number of seats won by the parties named by Sri Ray in 1971 elections are: Congress (O)-2; Bangla Congress-5; Forward Bloc-3; Muslim League-7; PSP-3; SSP-1; Gorkha League-2 and the Lok Sevak Sangha—nil, the total number of seats won by these parties in 1971 was therefore 23 and no more. Let us neglect the facts that tell against Sri Ray's premise; for example, the fact that the Forward Bloc was with the Left Front this time, and only a few defectors from the Forward Bloc went over to the Congress (R); or, the fact that while Ajoy Mukherjee and some of his . followers went over to the Congress (R), the Bangla Congress led by Sri Susil Dhara was opposed to the Congress (R). Let us neglect these facts, and merely add up these 23 seats to the 105 seats won by the Congress (R) in 1971 as the Press was instructed to "add up" by Sri Ray in that refresher course in new arithmetic which was called a "press conference". According to the old arithmetic the total would be 128. But according to Sri Ray that would be wrong; we should see not 128 but 216 if we knew this new "Congress arithmetic" invented by Sri Ray.' (Pp 35-36)

These are all facts damning enough to show up the real character of the election that took place in West Bengal in 1972. The case put by the Marxist-led opposition on the basis of these facts was so convincing that a person of the eminence of Jayaprakash Narayan, known for his freedom from commitment to any political party, proposed to conduct an impartial inquiry. He sought the co-operation both of the Congress as well as of the Marxist-led opposition. It is significant that, while the cooperation of the latter was forthcoming, the former declined to participate in the inquiry, with the result that Jayaprakash Narayan thought it useless to pursue the matter.

What happened in West Bengal in the latest election shows that

the one-party domination of the Congress has gone much further than at any time before. It is no more possible for the Congress to so manoeuvre after the election as to prevent the formation of a non-Congress Government or so early to topple it after it is formed. In States like West Bengal and Kerala, where there is an alternate political force which can not only win electoral victories and form alternate governments but can mobilise the majority of the people in defence of such alternate non-Congress govern-ments, the Congress cannot afford the luxury of even that 'free and fair election' which the people have been enjoying in the rest of the country for some years.

It is with reference to such 'free and fair elections' that people talk of the influence of black money, organisation of goondaism and rowdyism, resort to casteism, communalism and so on. All these dangers to 'clean elections' have always existed. They are part of the normal bourgeois election. The 1971 election in West Bengal when, in spite of the much boosted 'Indira Wave' the Marxist-led opposition came to the brink of securing a majority of seats and forming a government, however, showed that, where the organised forces of the working class are at the head of a democratic upsurge, the normal machinery of manipulating the electorate would be of no avail to the Congress. Hence the unprecedented, extra-ordinary use of terror and rigging in order to assure 'total victory' for the ruling party.

It is therefore totally unrealistic to make proposals for ensurelections would be ing that 'clean' if the proposals meant to be a constructive contribution to the improvement of the political parliamentary system in the country. The strug-gle against malpractices in election is, in fact, part of the struggle against the classes which are controlling the destinies of the nation and therefore determined to maintain their domination at all costs. It is true, of course, that making such proposals, popularising them and developing a powerful move-ment for getting those proposals accepted by the ruling party would help disillusion those who still think that 'clean elections' are possible even under the present regime. It is to this end that some proposals are made below. It is necessary to make it clear that these proposals are by no means exhaustive. They will have to be supplemented by other proposals.

The first major proposal to be made in this connection is that the system of election should be basically revised. It is the present system of single member constituencies with distributive vote that makes it possible for a party that secures only a minority of votes between 40 and 45%, is able to get as much as 70 to 75% of the seats. This unfair advantage of the system has sometimes been taken by the opposition as well. But it has, by and large, gone to the ruling Congress Party. That party therefore is interested in continuing the system. The interests of democracy however demand that no party, whether the ruling or opposition, is enabled to take advantage of this lacuna in the electoral system.

The first reform of the system should therefore be the establishment of proportional representation either by the cumulative or by the single transferable vote, to be put into practice in multi-member constituencies. This will make it possible for even a small party with the support of a sizable section of the electorate to get a corresponding number of its candidates returned. Conversely, even the strongest party will not be able to secure representation disproportionate to its electoral strength.

One possible argument against the adoption of this system is that it will lead to a state of perpetual political instability. If by this is meant that it will be no more possible for a party that enjoys the support of only a minority among the electorate to maintain its monopoly of power, while no other party will be in a position to take its place, then there is validity in this argument. But the political leadership of our country, like that of other countries, is resourceful enough to adapt itself to this new situation, so that as in such coun-

tries as France, Italy and so on where this system prevails, it will form coalitions either before or after the election.

These coalitions in France, Italy and so on are no more unstable than say, for instance, in some States of India, like Kerala and West Bengal where, in spite of the system of distributive vote in single member constituencies, governmental instability has been the order of the day. The point is that political stability does not come by a particular electoral system but out of a particular combination of economic and socio-political factors. Instability is a reflection of political reality, rather than the result of a particular electoral system.

One consequencies of the adoption of the new system will be that the dominating position of the Congress Party in the political life of the country and the consequent capacity of that party to manoeuvre the administration in its favour at the time of elections will get minimised and, to that extent, it will be a factor for clean elections.

A number of other suggestions can be made, including a better system of registration of voters. It happens that, under the present system, the register of voters can itself be manipulated by the ruling party and its minions in the bureaucracy. Registration of bogus voters, the deliberate deletion of actual voters and other malpractices in connection with voters' lists have become so common that ways and means have to be found to overcome these difficulties.

The principle of the secrecy of vote is also grossly violated under the present system, particularly the changes introduced just before the 1972 election. There is room for suspicion that these changes were deliberately made in order to serve the interests of the ruling party. These and the way in which the official machinery of returning and polling officers etc., were used in West Bengal have been explained in detail by Jyoti Basu in his above-quoted pamphlet. They also deserve careful consideration on the basis of which alone can concrete proposals to this end be made.

Rigged or free

BAL RAJ MADHOK

FAIR and free elections, freedom of thought, expression and press and independence of judiciary are the three pillars on which the edifice of democracy stands. The first of these is the most important. If the elections are not fair and free and the government of the day is able to secure a packed Parliament through rigging of elections, the other two pillars, freedom of thought, expression and press and independence of judiciary, can be destroyed through constitutional means.

The question of fair and free elections is much wider and more important than the question of clean elections. Use of money and liquor, arousing of caste and communal feelings to secure group votes, impersonation and many other things can and do affect the election results, and constitute electoral malpractices. They can be eliminated or their effect minimised through suitable political and legal action with the cooperation of different political parties. Political education, improvement in the economic condition of the common people, a strong sense of nationalism which may impel a person to place wider national interests above personal and party interests and suitable legislation can go a long way in ensuring that the elections are clean. It is however much more important that elections are fair and free and the three pillars of democracy are not tampered with.

The Indian Constitution which came into force in November, 1949, has specially provided for the preservation of these three pillars of democracy. It has guaranteed

freedom of thought, expression, including freedom of press as a fundamental right of the Indian people. It also contains specific provisions for ensuring independence of the judiciary and conducting of the elections in a free and fair manner. The provision about the appointment of an Election Commission by the President, was meant to see that elections are free and fair and that the government of the day does not rig them.

India has had five general elections since freedom. The first four general elections were generally fair and free. There have been complaints of malpractices by different candidates including misuse of official machinery in favour of candidates of the ruling party, appeal to caste and communal feelings to get group votes, use of money to purchase votes and use of transport to carry the voters to and from the polling booths. These malpractices were found to be growing in the successive elections. The Election Commission referred to them in its various reports and suggested measures to eradicate or minimise them in the interest of clean elections.

In the first general election there were complaints of changing of ballot boxes by changing the symbol labels pasted outside the boxes in the interest of the party in power. It was to prevent this kind of alleged 'sweeping of ballot boxes' that the Election Commission introduced the marking system under which voters put their stamp mark on one and the same ballot paper which contains the names and symbols of the contesting candidates. It was also decided to have the minimum

possible time lag between the polling and counting of votes. Counting of votes in the first four general elections was done polling-boothwise. A suggestion for mixing of ballot papers of different polling booths before counting was rejected by the Election Commission in its report on the fourth general election with convincing reasons.

There were no complaints of rigging the elections in the first four general elections except in Jammu and Kashmir State where elections were conducted by a separate election commissioner appointed by the State Government. Unfortunately, that complaint persisted even after the jurisdiction of the Election Commission of India was extended to that State as well at the time of the fourth general election.

It was this fact of elections in India being free and fair which strengthened peoples faith in the democratic system and earned a reputation for the Election Commission of India. India came to be accepted as a shining example of democracy in which elections, even though held on a gigantic scale with most of the electorate illiterate and poor, were generally fair and free.

This situation changed in the fifth elections to the Indian Lok Sabha held in March, 1971. For the first time allegation about rigging of the election on a large scale, through induction of over three crores of chemically treated ballot papers on which the cow and calf symbol of the ruling party was already stamped by an invisible ink which became visible by the time of counting and the stamp marks put by the voter in the polling booths on such ballot papers evaporated, were made. It was also alleged that it was to avoid detection of this fraud on the electorate that the election rules were amended after the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, providing for the mixing of ballot papers of different polling booths before counting.

The exact modus operandi adopted for this alleged rigging of the election has been described by a highly placed instrument employed by the powers that be, for this operation, murder democracy, in an unsigned letter to the writer. The letter was dated March 15, 1971 and

was written in Urdu. Its literal translation in English is given below.

'Dear Madhok Sahib.

'You must have been surprised at the result of mid term elections. It is not only you and your party, the people belonging to Indira Congress are themselves puzzled about this miracle. They had thought that even if a big section of the people voted for them on the consideration of having a stable government at the centre, they would hardly get 270 seats. But, much against this expectation they have got 350 seats and almost all the top leaders of other parties have been defeated. Some people think that the slogan of 'garibi hatao' has worked. Others think that the slogan of socialism has worked. Some others think that Congress spent huge sums of money, made wild promises particularly to the Jhuggi dwellers, made lavish use of liquor, distributed clothes, quilts, Dhotis, etc., among the poor, misused government machinery and that the victory of the Congress was the result of such things. No doubt all this did happen. But they only cover the big fraud, the details of which are given below.

'The fact is that this time Mrs. Indira Gandhi had made up her mind that she must get 2/3 of the total seats of Lok Sabha at all costs and to achieve that all means, fair or foul, must be employed. To that end a conspiracy was hatched in collaboration with the Chief Election Commissioner. The Electoral Officers of all States were instructed to send the ballot papers that had been got printed in different States to the Election Commissioner for scrutiny. In the meantime, about three crores and twenty seven lakhs ballots papers were printed in the U.S.S.R. and brought to India. All these ballot papers had the same names and symbols as other ballot papers. But a special chemical was applied to the symbol part of the ballot papers which could efface any ink mark put on it after some time and that chemical too could evaporate with the impact of heat after some time. Before applying that chemical, a stamp mark was put on cow and calf symbol, which was invisible at the time of voting, but which was to become visible automatically after the evaporation of the chemical so that it may appear that the vote has been cast in favour of the Congress candidates.

When ballot papers reached the Election Commission, they were distributed according to booths in each Parliamentary constituency.
Three hundred to four hundred chemically treated ballot papers were included in the first series of each polling booth and an equal number of genuine ballots was separated from the total. In this way booth-wise packets of ballot papers were prepared. These boothwise packets for different constituencies were bundled together and returned to the electoral officers of the States. Thus, the ballots used in each polling booth included three to four hundred chemically treated ballot papers and the rest were ordinary (not chemically treated). The intention was to see that at the time of polling chemically treated ballot papers which were bound to go 100% in favour of the Congress are polled first.

'The votes cast through the remaining non-chemicalised ballot papers, would be distributed among different parties and candidates according to the choice of the voters. Thus, by securing first one lakh or so votes, the total number of chemically treated ballot papers that were thus distributed all over the country was 326,78,987 (Three crores. twenty six lakhs, seventy eight thousands, nine hundred and eighty seven). These were distributed in about 326 constituencies. These ballot papers were delivered in the U.S.S.R. embassy and the delivery was taken by...

Even though the same old ballot boxes which had been used for many years were used in this election, in order to generate a particular amount of heat a special paint was applied in them. One ballot box becomes full after the insertion of at the most 250 ballot papers. That is the way three to four ballot boxes are used at each booth. If there had been box wise counting of votes, the first box would have been found to contain none but votes cast in favour of the Congress. Other parties would not have got a single vote out of the votes in the first box of each booth. This would

have created suspicion as to why not a single vote out of the first two hundred or more votes was cast in favour of any other party. Therefore the novel method of mixing up of the ballots of a number of booths and then rotating them in a drum was adopted. The him of doing this was to see that the invisible mark if it had not become visible because of insufficient heat should become visible and the chemically treated and ordinary ballot papers should get mixed up so that all parties may find their votes in them although votes for Congress would be in overwhelming majority and other parties will have fewer votes. Almost one lakh such chemically treated ballot papers have been used in different parliamentary constituencies. In the constituency of Shrimati Indira Gandhi 175000 (one lakh and seventy five thousands) and in your constituency 125,000 (one lakh and twenty five thousands) such ballots were used.

The question may be asked as to how some leaders of the opposition parties have won. As I have said above, about one lakh votes were reserved for the Congress candidate in each constituency. Wherever the opposition candidate had a lead of more than one lakh votes, he got a chance otherwise he too would have lost.

'It is clear from all this that it has not been an election but a fraud on the whole country. Fraud with the enemies of the country may be justified but not with the people of ones own country.

'Your well wisher

An Indian who wants democracy to survive.'

That the information given in this letter is authentic, is borne out by the fact that identical information had been given to a number of opposition leaders before the election by some high ups in the governmental machinery who had been entrusted with the work of master minding the rigging operation. But those who were given this information were either too innocent to believe that Mrs. Gandhi could go to that length or left assured that they could not be the victims of the fraud which they thought was meant

to eliminate only those who were in the bad books of Mrs. Gandhi. A. B. Vajpayee and Morarji Desai did win. But the margin of victory of both these stalwarts was reduced by more than one lakh votes as compared to the 1967 election.

Furthermore, nearly 20,000 ballot papers in Gwalior constituency from which Vajpayee was elected were found to be blank. The only explanation for this can be that on such ballot papers, while the stamp marks put by voters disappeared, the invisible marks on the Congress symbol did not become visible because of some flaw in the chemicalisation process,

The fact that the elections to the Delhi Municipal Corporation which were held only 6 weeks after the Lok Sabha gave a massive victory to the Jana Sangh which should have forfeited its security at every seat if the Lok Sabha election results had been the true index of the peoples' mind and the 10% increase in the Jana Sangh vote in the 1972 election when the so called Indira wind was at its highest clearly point to some abnormality in the 1971 election. The difference in colour in the ballot papers of the Congress candidate and the Jana Sangh candidate from South Delhi revealed by the sample inspection of a few hundred ballot papers picked out at random and the dogged opposition of the ruling party to the plea for chemical examination of the suspected ballot papers are further proofs of the alleged rigging of elections through use of chemically treated ballot papers.

If democracy in India is to survive, it is of the utmost importance that a thorough probe is made into the conduct of the 1971 elections and the whole fraud is exposed and those who perpetrated it are brought to book. Any attempt at hushing up the matter would only further strengthen the doubts and make the death of democracy in India a certainty.

At the same time, specific steps must be taken to prevent rigging of elections in future. The first pre-requisite for that is to annul the changes in counting rules made on the eve of the 1971 elections. Counting must be done polling-

booth-wise and immediately after the polling is over. Had the counting been done polling booth-wise in the 1971 elections, this fraud would have been exposed within a short time after the counting began. The refusal of the government to revert to the system of counting adopted during the first four elections further strengthens the suspicion about the bona fides of the powers that be in the matter.

The second thing necessary to prevent such rigging of elections is to introduce punching of ballot papers in the place of stamping. The fact that such rigging of elections has taken place in a number of other countries during the past few years makes this change an imperative necessity to ensure fair and free elections in India.

Thirdly, the Election Commission of India must be reconstituted. It must be a three member commission and not a one member commission as at present. All the members of the election commission should be drawn from the highest judiciary and to ensure their independence a rule should be made that no member of the election commission would be given any government assignment, including governorship, after retirement.

These are the three minimum requirements for fair and free elections in India.

A number of steps have been suggested by the election commission and different political parties to make Indian elections clean and to reduce the influence of caste, community and money to the minimum during the election campaign. That aspect too is quite important. But, the question of ensuring that the elections be fair and free and preventing the government of the day from rigging the elections is much more important at the moment. It is time that all genuine democrats irrespective of their party affiliations who want democracy to survive in India give their urgent thought and attention to this question. If elections are not to be fan and free, the existence of political parties will become irrelevant and democracy will go the way it went in Indonesia and Ghana where this kind of rigging of elections was tried with success.

Reform must begin

ROMESH THAPAR

INDIA has entered the phase where qualitative changes are required in the structuring of her continental politics. The debate that is now joined ranges over a wide canvas. Should we move towards a presidential system? Would it be politically realistic to break the 'one State' language, one formula behind our federal structure and increase the number of States by reorganising new, independent stirrings within the existing States? Are we too centralised in certain respects and too decentralised in others? And so it goes on, this healthy questioning of the viability of our democratic institutions.

The most fundamental area of discussion is naturally the business of elections. The absence of wellorganised all-India parties, the entry of a large number of political operators who seek to exploit the system for their own ends, the distortion manifest in results between votes polled and seats won, the growing misuse of political power, the parallel breakdown of the norms of democratic functioning in various subtle ways, and, above all, the terrible cost of elections to individual candidates and contesting parties has brought the focus on to the question of clean elections.

Why 'clean'? Because the very cost—apart from other social factors—sparks massive corruption. The adoption by us of the British system of elections without regard to the complexities of India's continental politics has placed us in a predicament. In high moral fervour, unable to organise party funds by mass collections, we also legislated against company 'donations' which it was alleged, favoured the parties of the present exploi-

tative status quo. This reform has sanctified corruption on a colossal scale. Industrial tycoons, businessmen and smugglers of various description now contribute 'in black money' to party funds 'individually'—and, of course, expect appropriate rewards.

The disaster inherent in this situation is at last becoming apparent to us. It is clear that if we do not wish to crack the very bases. of our democratic functioning, we will have to agree at the level of an overwhelming majority of parties to take certain fundamental remedial measures, possibly before the next general elections. This is not at all impossible. Those who speak for the status quo are either timid about change or are not honest in their intentions about the functioning of a healthy and creative democratic life for India's continental system. In other words, the reform must begin.

It is not my intention to go into a long argumentation over the kind of suggestions that have been advanced by various quarters. I will confine myself to an area of discussion where a kind of consensus is developing between the parties of the so-called Right and Left. I refer to the growing propagation of the system of proportional representation as the most effective answer available at the moment to some of the ills of the present system.

Traditionally, proportional representation is described as a system which leads to a multiplicity of parties and coalition politics which are highly unstable—and likely to be even more so in the caste-influenced, plural society that is federal India. The criticism, largely from

Anglo-Saxon sources, can be met by advancing the example of a country like the German Federal Republic which practises the system of proportional representation but cancels out all parties unable to score a certain percentage of the total vote. We could do likewise in India. And, as the poser says, there are important lessons to be learned from neighbouring Ceylon.

Proportional representation, as a system, is also seen as something which divorces the tribunes of the people from their constituencies and gives encouragement to 'bosses' in the organisation. There is a certain validity in this assessment, but then no system can be described as perfect—or, for that matter, made perfect. Indeed, even today in India, the politician is cynical about his constituents and we have vivid examples from the past and the present of bossism.

It is important that we should, by trial and error, move towards a more scientific democratic expression in our society. The individualistic striving at the core of the present system of elections is not in keeping with the spirit of our times. It breeds operators, who are corrupt, and, in a sense, acclaimed for precisely this reason in what has become the murky area of politics.

We have to realise that in this age of traumatic change, the political party as a vital institution has to be strengthened. It alone possesses the capacity to articulate the needs of a section of the people and to work for their fulfilment. A multiplicity of parties represents a multiplicity of sections. This is the confrontation which sparks change. To ensure the process against anarchy, political splinters will have to struggle more energetically or face extinction in the legislatures.

Proportional representation compels political parties to present coherent programmes, to lay the stress on issues rather than personalities, and provides the facility to nominate, on the basis of the votes polled, men and women who understand their job as legislators. The illiterate politician is no longer an inevitability. The complexity of modern life with its demand for many skills and specialisations, can

be reflected in the legislatures. Indeed, politics is removed from the clutches of the unprincipled operators, the cynical fixers and the openly corrupt. It becomes a task, both imperative and compelling, for the finest minds in the social system.

Apart from these obvious benefits, let us test the proportional representation system with the challenge of 'cleanliness', if it may be so called.

Under this new system, it would be possible drastically to reduce the amount of money that goes into the holding of an election. Let me try and list some of the obvious packages of reforms which could be introduced under proportional representation and which is impossible under the present system.

- * Election funds would be established under an enlarged Election Commission at Central and State level to publicise the responsibilities of citizens in an election year, to print the appeals of all the political parties, to cover the area of the election without discrimination, and to print all the other materials which assist voters to cast their ballot, including lists of candidates to be nominated by the parties should they get the required number of votes.
- * It would be the responsibility of the Election Commission working though all-party committees to check voters lists and to update them methodically, a continuing process which is subject to much abuse when the responsibility rests only with citizens and with parties.
- * In the context of the massive expansion of radio and television in the coming years, it would be the permanent task of the Election Commission to ensure saturation coverage for the parties in these State-controlled media, and, of course, to see that mass media are not misused by the ruling party at the Centre and in the States.

These three tasks, fundamental to the election process would cover

all those areas which are serviced by corruption money, money which vitiates the moral fibre of the party that comes to power. Taken over by the Election Commission, in the manner suggested, these tasks would be disciplined to that extent.

The Election Commission would have to be suitably reorganised, expanded and insulated against pressures of all kinds. This can be done if there is a will to do it. As for the cost of the scheme, it would be less wasteful and destructive than the acceptance of the status

If the political parties of India could be persuaded to begin the exploration, theoretical and practical, of this reform in specifically Indian conditions, it would be necessary to establish certain norms as to their own functioning during the critical electioneering period. Money can corrupt at the level of agitation, demonstration, mass meetings and what have you. Vast funds can be expended on this sort of populism. Obviously, a healthy, meaningful political system has to push electioneering into a person-to-person, house-to-house approach—at least for several weeks before the casting of the vote.

When dealing with a population of 550 million, which is likely to expand in the next 25 years into anything between 800 to 1000 million, we can no longer live at peace with the democratic practises we have so far adopted. They must be constantly reviewed, tested, adjusted, refashioned, altered and modified in order to motivate and discipline the democratic processes. Failure to do this creates the anarchist urges with which we are again becoming familiar. So very often, anarchism is merely the harbinger of fascism.

Obviously, at the guts of this short plea for urgent reforms in our democratic functioning, lies the future role of the Election Commission. It cannot remain the inadequate instrument that it is today. It must become a major weapon of the reform. This needs early recognition where power rests. The next lot of elections are not so far away.

Books

FOURTH GENERAL ELECTION IN INDIA Edited

by S. P. Verma and Iqbal Narain. Orient Longman, 1970.

STUDIES IN THE FOURTH GENERAL ELECTIONS by Aloo J. Dastur, et. al. Allied Publishers, 1972.

PARTY SYSTEM AND ELECTION STUDIES by Rajni Kothari, et al. Allied Publishers, 1967.

WAHLEN IN INDIEN (in German) Edited by Graefin Bernsdorff.

Categories of political practice are not the same as those of political analysis. The gap between what scholars say and politicians do is unbridgeable. It is so even in those societies, such as the English, where political institutions like the parliament claim a hoary ancestry and political analysis is correspondingly old. Even where a politician is also a writer, his two roles are very distinct. The gap is not bridged—if anything, it has been widened—by the new techniques of behaviour analysis. An indication of why the gap exists is the date of publication of the studies above. Some three to five years elapsed between the election and the publication of the results of scholarly research. The scholar is not under the same pressure of time. If he was, he could not be so scholarly: but time is the politician's master. By the time the analyses were published, the political scene in India had changed so radically that the writings seem to arouse an almost archaeological interest.

Indian political scientists face a particularly severe dilemma. To put the matter in proper perspective, however, we should note that the major political institutions in India—legislatures and political parties—are foreign made articles. Along with the institution came the instructions on how to operate them.

British political leaders and scholars almost never believed (nor do many believe today) that India could successfully adapt the British parliamentary system to its conditions. This was not due to underestimating the political skills or public-mindedness. Most Englishmen genuinely appreciated India's uniquely different social system and the cultural and political traditions, which were far removed from those of pocket-sized insular Britain. Moreover, the parliament is so deeply rooted in British history that, like the caste system in India, only foreign scholars approach it clinically.

Empirical political research is largely an American product: two of the institutions sponsoring the studies under review—namely, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and the Indian Council for Social Science Research—were founded under American inspiration. The analytical tools used by many contributors to their studies were forged in America. Thus the compound irony: British institutions planted in India are analysed by Indian scholars with American conceptual apparatus.

The best studies of the elections contained in the volumes are the unpretentiously descriptive ones. This is the strength of the reports contained in Volume I of the massive Fourth General Election in India edited by S. P. Verma and Iqbal Narain. Writers of the reports on State elections are mostly residents of the States; they have followed political developments and are familiar with political tendencies and personalities. Of the many excellent surveys, one may mention that by M. M. Sankhder on the Delhi election, R. R. Parihar on Jammu and Kashmir, B. B. Jena on Orissa, J. C. Anand on Punjab.

On the whole, the authors of the State studies have done a commendable job, and many grass roots insights brighten their writing. However, when the editors of the two volumes attempt to produce generalisations, the weakness of political analysis, especially of producing 'a theory of election politics in India' becomes apparent. Part of the difficulty springs from the use of borrowed jargon, such as: 'the question, whether there is an emerging pattern (if any) in the election politics of the country, is one of the crucial indices of political socialization; one could attempt to measure with its help, how far democracy as a value has been internalised among the masses in the country.'

This declaration is buttressed, of course, by a quotation from that great theorist of democracy, Robert A. Dahl. That quotation may be repeated here for the edification of those who have not mislaid their compassion for sophomoric wisdom: 'A classification is a way of simplifying and, in this sense, "distorting" reality. All empirical analysis requires some simplifying "distortion". If every atom were treated as unique, physics would be impossible; if every medical case were considered unique, no advances in medicine would occur. In empirical analysis knowledge consists of generalisation, which requires one to exclude the unique in favour of the general properties of a concrete event or system.'

To the learned theoretician, an atom of matter, a case of human illness, and a political act are similar entities, and knowledge develops through a process of generalisation. Armed with such wisdom Indian political scientists are ready to unravel the mysteries of Indian election politics.

The volume of essays by Rajni Kothari and his colleagues, Party System and Election Studies, shows both more sophisticated description and more confused theorising. The authors display much greater facility with the current political jargon. As the main author puts it. 'The orientation of this set of papers is the system of one party dominance that has emerged in India, first under the Congress movement for independence and social change, and since independence under the peculiar functioning of parliamentary and party institutions that developed as a result of orienting an open and competitive policy to the tasks and compulsions of nation-building.'

In the second section of the book, 'the conceptual framework of party dominance and caste-politics interaction is subjected to election data gathered in the field with a view to highlight the processes through which such a party system passes, bringing out both its strengths and weaknesses. Of particular importance in this context are the three studies of Congress reverses in an inter-election period. These byeelections (in 1963) caused a considerable stir in the country and it is a reflection of this stir that the Congress Party itself at first commissioned the Centre to undertake these studies...These studies bring out vividly some of the blind spots in the electoral organisation and support bases of the Congress Party. The third part of the book consists of a rambling and partly incoherent essay, 'Voting Behaviour in a Developing Society: a Working Paper.'

The descriptive and narrative chapters are first rate. These include Extent and Limits of Community

Voting: the Case of Baroda East,' by Rajni Kothari and Tarun Sheth, 'Intra-Party Conflicts in the Bihar Congress', by Ramashray Roy, and the studies of the three bye-elections of 1963 by Bashiruddin Ahmed ('Congress Defeat in Amroha'), Ramashray Roy ('Congress Defeat in Farrukhabad') and Rushikesh Maru ('Fall of a Traditional Congress Stronghold').

These constituency studies are models of their kind. But the weak spots of the book are its first and third parts. Here is a footnote from the lengthy chapter on one party dominance: 'Few now believe that "Socialism" or any other doctrine affords the solutions to India's social and economic problems, and it seems probable to me that ideological disputations will have diminishing attraction for an age preoccupied with constructing viable programmes on concrete issues whether of economic organisation or of defence and foreign policy, though they may still be important for anchoring the loyalties of the party functionaries. A more interesting aspect of the "end of ideology" is that perhaps no sensible person now expects to find final solutions to the problems of social living and personal contentment.' Apparently the number of sensible persons seems to have diminished since these remarks were made.

The 'working paper', entitled 'Voting Behaviour in A Developing Society', seeks to describe and analyse the political culture in India—to determine to what extent and under what conditions it is "parochial" and "traditional", or "modern" and "participant". These are terms coined by Gabriel Almond and his team studying political development and comparative politics.

Almond's book, Politics of the Developing Areas, originally published in 1959, has recently been resurrected in India thanks to a subsidy from the P.L. 480 counterpart funds. The basic dimension in Almond's analysis is the polarity between the developing and the developed, or traditional and modern, societies. This is also the dimension adopted in the essay under discussion, which asserts: 'We are looking at Indian society not in static terms, but as a society moving from traditional to modern forms of political behaviour...We are, therefore, committed to present evidence that India is moving in discernible directions as a polity, in terms of certain conceptual and intellectual perspectives which we shall subsequently elaborate. These directions may be dysfunctional, as well as functional, to the achievement of the key goals of democracy, socialism, secularism, and integration which presumably are the basic goals towards which India is striving.'

It must be said in favour of Almond and company that they sincerely believed in the polarity of tradition and modernity that they had invented. During the past ten years, however, when new perspectives have been opened by radical scholarship, Almondian categories have been swept aside but his followers in India keep marching on.

In his foreword to Studies in the Fourth General Elections, supported by the Indian Council of Social

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Science Research, the chairman of the Council, M. S. Gore, states that the Council 'desires that the main findings of the research reports supported by it should be publicized as widely and quickly as possible with a view to promoting their utilization in teaching and policy formation. The volume contains seven monographs led off by Aloo J. Dastur's 'The Bombay Voter 1967'. Other essays deal with Gujarat (by D. N. Pathak), Madhya Pradesh (B. R. Purohit), Nagpur (G. S. Kini), Punjab and Haryana (B. S. Khanna and Satya Deva), Rajasthan (S. P. Verma and Iqbal Narain) and Uttar Pradesh (Raj Narain).

The studies are based on multiple interviews with a sample of voters in limited geographical areas. The main issue is formulated by Dr. Pathak: 'In the study of voting behaviour, one of the most vital, though baffling, questions is to find out when exactly the voter decides for whom he is going to vote.' answer is provided by the author at some length. As he writes: 'Of the 457 voters [studied by Dr. Pathak] as many as 181 or 39.6 per cent responded so that they made the decision four or more weeks before the election. The next big group, numbering 165 (36.1 per cent) made their decision on the very day of the election. Their decision to vote, therefore, might be the end product of various influences. They were the people who must have made their decision after having been exposed to the election campaign. It was this group who was the main target of the campaigners for the different parties and candidates. The third big group of voters numbering 68 (12.7) per cent) decided to vote one week before the election. The above finding would suggest that the best time to appeal to the voter is either 4 or more weeks before or one week before or thereabout."

A 'clear and unmistakable finding was that the higher the education of the voters, the earlier was the voting decision.' The editing of the volume leaves something to be desired.

Some part of the nerve in the political process in India is uncovered by N. G. S. Kini who came to the conclusion that 'Those who possess high political awareness reject Congress and vote non-Congress parties. More modernized citizens have higher political awareness. This implies that the Congress Party is supported by the unenlightened sections of the com-munity which is numerous. As people acquire greater political awareness as a result of political mobilization in the intensification of antagonisms and higher education in the years to come, they may increasingly reject Congress unless it radically alters its tactics. Kini adds: "The tendency of citizens, who are "high" on all scales to vote for non-Congress parties, is due to the operation of the G-factor, which is called "Modernization" factor. The fact that those who are "high" on modernization vote for parties other than Congress, and those who are "low" vote Congress Party can also be independently verified in the real world. These "high" and "low" groups constitute two distinct political subcultures which are in a state of polarization. This polarization is not political but is social, in the sense [that] its current

expression takes the form of antagonism between caste groups...'

That the more modernized and more enlightened individuals have a peculiar political ethos is confirmed in Kini's study of women voters: 'The ... group with higher S.E.S. (socio-economic status) has ceased to believe in the present system of democracy in the country. Women in this group are highly modernized, read newspapers, listen to radio, do not act on the instructions of caste/group/vote leaders, discuss politics in their family circles and lay great importance on issues...They participate in the activities of voluntary associations but do not attend election meetings or cultural programmes of parties. They decide their voting choice according to their own judgment and are hostile to government. These vote for Jana Sangh.' Confronting them is the other group with lower S.E.S. (socio-economic status) predominantly Hindu middle (ruling) and lower castes. group believes in the present system of democracy run along party lines in the country. These women are not so much modernized but they are mobilised and politicised. They do not read newspapers. Neither are they in a position to identify issues debated in public meetings, nor do they care for They are approachable for their votes by husbands, family heads, a variety of intermediaries such as caste/vote leaders, local influentials, etc. These women support the government. They have hardly participated in the activities of any voluntary association. They are mostly, guided by somebody in their voting choice. Notwithstanding all this, they realise the value of the vote and are politically These support mostly Congress but occasionally communists also.' Other investigators report similar findings: the poor and illiterate believe in democracy: the rich, educated and 'modernised' do not. Among the Hindus, the modernized support the Jana Sangh, while the benighted, caste-ridden, tradition-bound individuals vote for Congress or the Communists.'

Although the findings may astonish some, they do bear out the not-so-hidden bias of the theorists of modernization. By definition the modernized individual is impervious to the appeals of communism, even of its little sister, the Congress Party. The admonition that research findings such as those presented in the volumes under review should be promptly disseminated so as to be used in teaching (teaching what?) or for policy making (by whom?) makes sense. Apparently, if the Congress Party wants to perpetuate its rule, it should keep the masses illiterate and unmodernized (Is this why literacy has made such small progress in the quarter century of independence?).

But it is conceivable that there is something grievously wrong with the basic concepts of political analysis, for the criteria of modernity measure not political enlightenment but a vested class interest, and the educated, independent-minded woman voter in Nagpur supports the Jana Sangh for other than the specious reasons. A missing element in the analyses is the simple fact that politics has to do with power.

Those who have a high personal sense of social or political efficacy have little need of political power. The poor, on the other hand, are perpetually crushed by the power-economic, social, ritual-exercised by those who stand above them. Their only relief in societies where the possibility exists is to align with or support political power that counters their economic and social exploitation. A symbiotic relationship develops between the political ruling group and the oppressed and disinherited masses. Indeed, this is the root relationship in political societies and the hope, or threat, of revolution is implicit in it. The economically dominant class is afraid that the political leadership will be infected by the hopes and aspirations of the masses. Hence its support to the Swatantra or Jana Sangh; hence also the ever lengthening tentacles of political corruption by which the rich ensure that they can keep the cake while they eat it.

THE CITIZEN AND DEMOCRACY: Edited by

Surindar Suri

Ranjıt Gupta. National Coordinating Committee for Voters Education, New Delhi, 1971.

Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi.

The concept of democracy in the modern sense developed in India during British rule. Provision for the direct election of members of legislatures was made for the first time under the Government of India Act, 1919. But only those who had certain property or tax-paying qualifications were entitled, to vote. They constituted barely two per cent of the total population and nine per cent of the adult male population. Adult franchise was ruled out as administratively impracticable. The Government of India Act, 1935, raised the number of enfranchised people to fourteen per cent of the population by including education as a qualification for voting.

The Constitution of free India extended the franchise to each adult, male or female. On this basis, elections to Parliament and the State Assemblies have been held a number of times but it is too early to conclude that the system has taken roots in this land. For one thing, there had not been adequate preparation and training of the people in the exercise of franchise on account of the high percentage of illiteracy obtaining in the country at the time of independence. Secondly, our feudalistic background and social and economic disparities have been a stumbling block in the proper exercise of the right to vote. This has resulted in an unseemly scramble for power and political confusion of the worst kind.

It was with this background that several social service organisations, including the Gandhi Peace Foundation and the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, organised a seminar in December 1970 in New Delhi to evolve a workable programme of making the voter conscious of his rights and duties and thereby create a healthy and impartial public opinion and ensure a smooth working of the democratic system. Nearly 40 eminent scholars, social

scientists, jurists, journalists and veterans of the freedom struggle participated in the deliberations.

The National Coordinating Committee for Voters' Education was a direct outcome of the consensus that emerged from this seminar. It was charged with the task of 'articulating and mobilising the aspirations and feelings of the vast cross-section of the people outside the party system'. The sponsoring organisations were asked to set up citizens' committees all over the country to guide the voters as to how and in whose favour they should cast their votes. These committees were to see to it that defectors and persons of doubtful character and integrity did not enter the legislatures.

The Citizen and Democracy is a record of the deliberations at the seminar. It also includes the working and background papers read at this conclave and its recommendations. Activities of some of the sponsoring associations have also been listed. The list of participants is given at the end.

Events sometimes overtake good intentions. No sooner had the participants dispersed than came the announcement of a snap general election to the Lok Sabha, leaving little time for the citizens' committees to be formed and activised. The book should, however, prove a useful guide to any such committees that may be formed for educating the voters in future elections.

Venkatarangaiya's book is of an informative and academic nature. It explains the importance of elections to the structure and working of modern democracy and compares the different systems beginning with that of ancient Greece. Various methods of voting, constituency demarcation, proportional representation, qualifications for membership of elective bodies. role of political parties, campaign expenses, popular responses and the working of the Election Commission have been analysed at some length. It is a useful handbook for ready reference.

K. N. Sud

THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF ELECTORAL LAWS by Douglas Rae. Yale University Press, 1967.

I must confess, from the outset, to a strong bias against that latest of American fads which is rapidly creeping into the social sciences—quantification. To quote Richard Cobb: 'Apart from imposing upon the unfortunate reader dehumanizing jargon and a linguistic orthodoxy wrapped in Tuetono-American obscurity—and this is the price to be paid for Quantification in terms of literary loss—there is little ...value in establishing beyond a doubt, that, let us say, Robespierre represented 1/12th of the Committee of Public Safety...or that the Bastille was stormed by, among others, 33\frac{1}{2} watchmakers.' (Historians in White Coats; P. 1528, TLS, 3.12.71)

If this book of his is anything to go by, Douglas Rae is a most fervent worshipper at the shrine of this great mathematical god. Speaking as a layman, I feel that quantification in the social sciences faces

two major problems. The first is its predilection for expressing the most simple of facts in as abstract and confusing a manner as possible. To take a mild example from this book:

The principle of proportional representation is quite simple: the share of seats awarded to any party (s) should be equal to the share of the vote which it has won (t). (This can) be defined by the condition; or, in ratio:

$$\frac{s=t}{t} = 1$$

Having already translated the most simple of hypotheses into a confusing algebraic formula, the author proceeds to provide us with a Figure entitled 'The Hypothetical Condition of Perfect Proportionality' which, for its simplicity and obviousness, has to be seen to be believed. I am sure that this study will be of enormous use to those who can remember that M is the magnitude (or, in simpler language, the average number of seats per electoral district) which

is expressed by the formula $M = \frac{X}{Y}$ when X stands

for the total seats and Y for the total districts; or that Fe means the fractionalization of vote shares which can be expressed in a bewildering diagram [cf: P. 56].

I am afraid that I am, most emphatically, not one of those and can only hope that this trend will be a short-lived one.

The second problem of quantification vis-a-vis the social sciences is that it is dealing with human beings and human institutions who are notoriously frivolous and irrational. It is perfectly possible to reduce every human activity to a mean average but the resulting figure will encompass the greatest of variations and can, therefore, be of the most restricted value only. Let us imagine that we poll a hundred human beings as regards their dietary habits and find that, on an average, every human being ate 25th meals a day. If we broke down the figure to its individual components we would probably find that not a single one of those polled actually ate 28th meals a day but that the variation ran from about a $\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 or 6. Of course, this figure would only be reached after tremendous analytical soul-searching as to what constitutes a meal and how to determine when one meal comes to an end and the next one begins—would one use a calorie count as a yardstick, or a time span (continuous eating for, say, ½ an hour); and how to deal with the problem posed by habitual nibblers, etc.. As far as I am concerned, this is a purely theoretical exercise with no real value but dear to the hearts of the quantifiers. If, perchance, you feel that I am exaggerating, then all I can ask you to do is to read this book.

However, having made my intense dislike of quantification obvious, I must confess that, once one has been able to part the obscurantist veil of algebraic

formulae and scattergrams (sic) imposed by the author between the analysis and the reader, this book contains some very valid empirical observations. Douglas Rae has collected a very impressive and exhaustive array of data—election results from 20 western democracies over the period January 1, 1945 and January 1, 1965. Using these facts, he presents us with an analysis of how electoral laws have a very definite effect on the political life of a country and how they shape a nation's political party system. His conclusion is that nearly all existing electoral laws tend to strengthen strong parties to the detriment of weaker ones by apportioning the former a larger share of seats in the legislature than would be warranted by their share of the popular vote and vice versa. There are some electoral laws—notably the majority-plurality ones—which, in fact, 'manufacture' legislative majorities.

The only known solution to this tendency is a perfect proportional representation (PR) system wherein the number of seats awarded to a party in a legislature is in direct proportion to their share of the popular The danger of a simple PR system, which exists only in theory, is that it would result in a multiplicity of political parties each having only a small share of seats in the legislature. This would necessitate political coalitions between parliamentary parties to enable a working majority which could easily lead to the political chaos that characterized the French Fourth Republic. Douglas Rae also illustrates the effect that the number of seats allocated to each electoral district has on election results. His finding is that, up to a certain point, the more seats there are in each electoral district the more direct a proportionality results. But, this, of course, would also lead to the greater fractionalization characteristic of PR systems.

The conclusions reached in this book are, perhaps, best illustrated by figures from the 1967 and 1972 State Assembly Elections in Madhya Pradesh.* In 1967, the Jana Sangh obtained 28.28% of the votes cast and were awarded 26.35% of the seats in the State Assembly. In the same year, the Congress secured 56.42% of the seats for a vote share of 40.66%. In 1972, the Congress was able to secure 48.14% of the votes which resulted in 74.32% of the seats. The Jana Sangh, though it improved its vote share from 28.28% to 28.46% was, in fact, awarded only 16.22% of the seats.

On the face of it, there is something seriously wrong here. Most opposition parties in India (notably, the CPI(M) in the recent West Bengal State Assembly Elections) normally protest that this is the result of electoral malpractises. The fault, in fact, really lies in a set of electoral laws which manifestly favour the large party to the detriment of smaller ones. The situation in India is more unbalanced than most as there is only one really large party. This is not to say that the majority-plurality system is all bad. For, it can lead to 100% change as a result

^{*}These figures are taken from Seminar 153, Pp 12-13, May 1972

of as little as a 1% vote swing. To take a micro-example, let us suppose that Mr. Nair and Mr. Jain are standing for election to the Board of Directors of a firm and each needs only a simple majority to 63 votes are cast. Mr. Rae secures 32 votes to Mr. Jain's 31 and is elected. If, in the next election, one of the voters switches camp then Mr. Jain will be successful. Thus, the difference of only one vote leads to a complete change. The same principle operates, in a more complex manner, in the electoral laws of such countries as India, the U.K. and the U.S.A. Majority-plurality systems, therefore, tend to be elements of radical change even though they have an unfortunate tendency to suppress small parties.

It is not in the scope of Rae's book to present a suitable alternative to the two major electoral law systems prevalent throughout the democracies of the world. But it is obvious that they need to be reformed in such a way as to bring about as close a balance as possible between the wishes of the voters, as expressed by the votes they award to each party, and the number of seats awarded to each political party in the legislature while still ensuring political stability. Anyone wishing to undertake this task—indeed, anyone concerned with elections at all—would do well to read this book. One can only wish that the author had written it in plain old-fashioned English.

Tejeshwar Singh

ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL REFORMS IN

INDIA. Edited by Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap. Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi, 1971.

Elections and the reforms in the electoral system have been a subject of study for a long time in the country. Every 5 years or even in between whenever the elections are held, there is a spurt of national debate on the deficiencies in the present election system in the country and the factors that prevent, according to a few, the fair choice. The present volume according to the editors is a collection of contributions from eminent statesmen and scholars on the subject. It is hoped that this volume would serve the purpose of formulating sound and rational policies with respect to the changes that are brought from time to time in the election laws and election system of the country.

The essays in this volume could be classified under the following heads:

- (a) Those dealing with the electoral law and system and changes therein.
- (b) Those describing the Parliamentary elections in some of the countries the world over.

To this are added notes and views on electoral reforms in India as suggested by various prominent authorities and, lastly, a good bibliography.

If one were to review the book from the impact that it has made pointing out the various deficiencies of

the electoral system in the country and the consequent reforms in the election system, one comes to the conclusion that they are, by and large, views at a very general level and they only describe the various malpractices that exist in the country, but do not suggest any remedy. Or, at best, remedies suggested are not relevant to this situation. If a few of these suggestions were put into implementation, they would require a huge super-structure of bureaucratic machinery. It is doubtful, even with this much of machinery, whether the results obtained would be commensurate with the costs involved.

For example, Dr. Srivastava in his essay on 'Expediting the Disposal of Election Petition' suggests that certain clauses of the election act need to be amended. It is possible that the deletion of such clauses may hasten the process dealing with election petitions, but it is doubftul whether it would do any good to the illegal practices which are resorted to during the elections. I feel that this can only be done if the political parties establish a code of conduct and ethics of behaviour. Unless they are firm on this, the number of petitions which are filed after every election would increase astronomically and one day may throttle the total machinery.

Speaking in the same vein, Dr. Sethi suggests reforms in the electoral law so that it may encourage the merger of small parties into a bigger one. The basic reason for this is that in a democratic system the role of the opposition party is very vital and, unless the system is able to develop a really powerful opposition, it would not be able to bring about real democracy in the country. However, the idea, though sound, has not been properly put. What is required to bring about a merger of the parties of like opinion is not legislative action or reforms in the electoral law, but the education of the people in general. And here again, the role of education is of paramount importance. We know from past experience that legislation alone does not succeed. We have to change the attitude of the people and their thinking process before we can anticipate any permanent change.

Another basic thing which the authors have failed to discuss is the age for voting, as today we find the world over there is an urge to concede the right to vote from the age of 18 and involve the young in political decision making. Now, if this were to be introduced in India, it would be a radical step as a large proportion of young people could then participate in the process of political selection.

I have taken only two examples to prove my contention that the present essays, though, discussed by scholars and statesmen, only touch the fringe of the problem. The basic issues still remain to be discussed.

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A note from

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Communications

I WENT through the recent issue of your esteemed journal SEMINAR (August, 72) which is a symposium on 'decentralisation' and I wish to bring to your attention the following:

Decentralisation is not the essence and soul of federalism. Decentralisation presupposes heaping of all available powers in one place or source. Decentralisation means delegation of those powers from one place or source to other distant units or agents. As such, 'decentralisation is not the essense of federalism. It can also be had in a unitary State. In fact, in a unitary State, it is even possible to give greater powers to the local units than to States in a federation. What makes a Government federal is the autonomy of the States,' according to S. P. Aiyar in Federalism and Social Change.

It is interesting to note that as far back as 1928, Sir P. S. Sivasamy Aiyer in his book 'Indian Constitutional Problems' suggested for India an extensive measure of decentralisation within a unitary Government.

It is my humble opinion that this essential nature of 'decentralisation' and 'federal principle' has not been given sufficient attention in that valuable symposium 'on the major dimension of federal politics.'

Murasoli Maran

Member of Parliament.

THIS note is stimulated by the discussions in the September 1972 issue of SEMINAR, especially the piece by Dr. Joshi¹. Dr. Joshi¹s article raises the question of relevance of the social sciences, and suggests that the dominant social science of India today fails to meet this criterion of 'relevance'. In this note, it is suggested that it may be somewhat misleading to pose the quesion in terms of relevance. The problem is then reformulated in terms of the relationship of theory to reality, and the process of abstraction to be used i.e., the method.

We shall primarily be concerned with the critique offered by Dr. Joshi, and not his explanations of why social science today is what it is. Dr. Joshi argues that the social sciences in less developed countries are irrelevant in the sense that the questions raised by the social sciences are quite different from those thrown up into prominence by social realities. The problem of relevance in

social science is part of the wider problem of relevance of the western intellectual heritage to the underdeveloped countries. Three conceptions in particular of orthodox social science need to be questioned: (a) 'the scientific man', (b) the equation of scientific competence with technical sophistication and (c) the assumption of universality of social science.

The first of these conceives the social scientist as a 'value-free' technician. The second leads logically to technical sophistication becoming an end in itself, an example being economics. This also leads to questions being selected or rejected on the basis of the techniques available. Finally, the pursuit of and insistence upon technical sophistication *per se* also lead to rigid compartmentalisation and narrow specialisation, especially harmful in social science.

While Dr. Joshi is quite correct in criticising the equating of scientific competence with technical sophistication, and in pointing out the irrelevance of social science, it may be more useful to view social science today critically from the point of view of method. Posing the issue in terms of relevance already appears to concede a lot to the orthodoxy that is not warranted. In particular, the suggestion that there is a conflict or necessary trade-off between 'competence' and 'relevance' needs to be attacked.

This becomes evident when one finds in the same issue of SEMINAR Nandy² arguing that the demand for relevance is designed to give prominance to relevance at the cost of quality and that relevance-peddling will merely promote incompetence.

Dr. Joshi fails to challenge the idea of a necessary conflict or trade-off between relevance and quality by saying: 'quality will follow rather than precede relevance in the context of underdeveloped countries'.³

Much confusion also arises from not defining the terms 'relevance' and 'competence', so freely used. One would search in vain through Nandy's article for a definition of competence. We suggest that some of the confusion could be avoided by reformulating the discussion from the point of view of method as below.

All theory involves abstraction. The literal reality is far too complex to be

^{1.} SEMINAR, September 1972, pp. 24-29

^{2.} SEMINAR, September 1972, pp. 30-31

³ SEMINAR, September 1972, p 29

comprehensively part and parcel of theory. The questions to be asked of a given theory are then: what features of the reality being investigated are abstracted into the theory, what questions does this theory pose, and what is the *process* of analysis in the theory. We shall illustrate from economic theory, which is considered by many social scientists to have made the most rapid strides in social science.

The dominant neo-classical economic theory has over the past hundred years formulated and proved a set of propositions with increasingly refined mathematical techniques. The early non-mathematical statement goes back to some version or other of Adam Smith's 'Invisible hand' purporting to show that a free market society was the ideal one. At this stage, the philosophical foundations of this theory were quite explicit—English liberalism. The same core ideas are reformulated in terms of utility calculus by Bentham, and then Jevons.

In the early twentieth century, we have on the one hand Marshall's restatement of the ideal nature of the perfectly competitive equilibrium brought about by the free play of the market forces, and on the other Walras's general equilibrium model attempting to show the existence of equilibrium under perfect competition. Prof. Samuelson's Foundations⁴ provides a rigorous statement in terms of calculus of the condition of perfectly competitive equilibrium and their equivalence, under certain assumptions, with pareto-optimality.⁵ The theorems of competitive equilibrium were proved once again, this time using linear programming techniques, in the fifties.⁶ And, finally, the existence of competitive equilibrium and its equivalence to 'pareto-optimality' were proved with the aid of topology.⁷

The points to note are that neoclassical theory concentrated on equilibrium, that the intellectual efforts of many brilliant practitioners of the theory were devoted to proving at increasing levels of mathematical sophistication essentially the same set of

4. Foundation of Economic Analysis (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; 1947).

propositions, that the analysis abstracts from history, and that it is entirely confined to making internally consistent statements, i.e., limits itself to the realm of logic. Under the influence of this theory, the practitioners of professional economics in the West were busy proving the impossibility of unemployment in free-enterprise economies during the great depression of the thirties (which makes one ask if relevance may not after all have something to do with method).

A rival theory in economics is that derived from the Marxian method and below we give a highly simplified picture with quite some violence to the theory, and injustice to its richness. In the view of this theory, capitalism is a particular historically specific mode of production that emerged as a product of the internal contradictions of feudalism. Capitalism itself would develop as a result of its internal contradictions, the major contradiction being that between the owner of the means of production, the capitalist, the buyer of labour-power, and the labourer, the worker who owns and sells merely labour-power.

It is this contradiction that manifests itself as the class struggle between the owners of Capital (a social relation) and Labour, and provides the crucial dynamic of capitalist development. The forces of competition, under capitalism, lead to the increasing concentration and centralization of capital, and the emergence of monopoly. As the process of capitalist development continues, its various inner contradictions intensify along-side, of it, and the stage is reached in the development of the forces of production under capitalism when they become incompatible with the existing social relations of capitalism—'the capitalist integument'-and capitalism as a mode of production gets destroyed.

The major points to note here are: the stress on disequilibrium and dynamics, as opposed to equilibrium and statics in the neoclassical theory, the historical character of the analysis as opposed to the ahistoric character of neoclassical equilibrium analysis, the use of the dialectical method—stressing development through contradictions as opposed to the simply logical-deductive method of neoclassical theory and the rather more powerful and substantive statements generated by the theory based on the Marxist method.

We shall leave it to the reader to judge which theory has been a more powerful tool for social analysis. But, before we go on to offer some concluding comments, it must be emphasized that we have presented

^{5.} Pareto-optimality is defined as a state of economy where no person can be made 'better off' without making someone else 'worse off'. The terms 'better-off' and 'worse off' correspond to increase and decrease of subjective scalar valued functions the individual economic agents are assumed to possess and maximuse.

See, for example, Linear Programming and Economic Analysis by Dorfman, Samuelson and Solow (McGraw Hill, 1958).

For a simple treatment, see Introduction to General Equilibrium Theory and Welfare Economics by Quark and Sapoanik. For a very rigorous treatment, see The Theory of Value by G. Debreu.

both theories at a rather high level of abstraction, a fact to be particularly borne in mind when considering our presentation of the Marxian theory. For, an essential feature of this theory is its emphasis upon the process of successive concretisation in the application of the theory.

It follows from what has been said above that if economics is any guide, a really powerful approach to social analysis is the Marxian approach, especially because of its historical nature, and its use of both logic and dialectics.

Here was a case of two theories looking at the same reality—capitalism—but making very different abstractions and coming out with very different results—one with the idyllic picture of an equilibrium where every 'economic agent' is as well off as possible given the initial conditions (endowments etc.), and another of disequilibrium and change, and contradictions and class struggle in place of harmony; one assuming the automaticity of full employment in a free market economy, the other asserting the chronic tendency to unemployment as a result of the need of Capital to create a reserve army of unemployed; and so one could go on.

It may be objected that only the static version of the neo-classical theory has been presented. But this is by far the dominant version, and such dynamic versions of the theory as exist are concerned with proving the stability or otherwise of equilibria under varying assumptions. One could quite strongly argue that Marxian political economy has proved far more relevant in providing insights on capitalism and its historical development.

From the point of view of social analysis, then, one could quite legitimately argue for the use of the Marxist method in social science. It furthermore leads one to suggest that what is at the root of the issue of relevance is really the question of method. The Marxian method with its historical character, and emphasis on disequilibrium and change, is likely to prove far more relevant than methods that are ahistorical and focus on equilibrium. Viewed in this light, the danger of posing the issue in terms of relevance becomes obvious. It gives defenders of orthodoxy an excuse to pose a false conflict between 'quality' or competence' and relevance.

Having said this, one can certainly agree with Dr. Joshi that some of the more sophisticated mathematical techniques can easily be dispensed with (for the time being at any rate) when attempting to tackle concrete problems in social science, especially

in view of the fact that the data available does not lend itself to very productive manipulation by such techniques. However, the more fundamental issue is not one of techniques per se but what is a more powerful and relevant method—the ahistorical equilibrium method that is prevalent or the historical, dialectical method of Marx.

Dr. Joshi's strictures against the conception of the social scientist as a value free technician, and against the equating of technical sophistication with scientific competence are of course quite justified. His stricture against the assumption of universal social science is understandable if by that is meant that there are no universal categories applicable across time and space. In applying the Marxian theory to the Indian situation, for instance, one may have to develop concrete categories in addition to those presented in Marx's abstract analysis in capital, or modify the latter suitably.

This is of course part of the process of successive concretisations that the Marxist method stresses. But at some points in his article, Dr. Joshi seems to suggest rejection of an approach merely because it is 'western' and not indigenous. One cannot easily be persuaded that such rejection is correct. (Dr. Joshi of course stresses the relevance of Marxism, but seems to exclude that from the western intellectual heritage).

To conclude: the issue of relevance is more fundamentally the issue of method, of what features one abstracts from reality, of what guides the process of abstraction, and of what questions the method is capable of asking and answering. The present note has argued that the road to relevance and quality lies in a creative application of the Marxist method, especially so in the Indian context, which is one of ferment and change, social and political.

V. B. Athreya

Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi and University of Wisconsin, Madison, U.S.A.

MY respect for Satish Saberwal's persistent and serious interest in the fate of Indian social sciences cannot contain my astonishment at his communication (SEMINAR, 158). He accepts two of my propositions (SEMINAR, 157): truly competent Indian social scientists are few and incompetents cannot be, by definition, relevant. Yet, he fails to see that the peacock called relevance, about to be declared a national bird, is actually an imported crow. I would have thought that none except the myopically elitist will care to screen the

relevant from the irrelevant amongst the sixty odd Indian social scientists doing worthwhile work, and that everyone will be more concerned about how to provide opportunities and appropriate institutional settings to enable some of the other social scientists to at least make a choice between relevant competence and irrelevant competence. Saberwal, alas, has proved me wrong.

I commend it to him that the real battle is being fought elsewhere: between isolated, scattered competence and unrequited hard work on the one hand, and organised illiteracy and deviousness on the other. In that battle, the Ivy league nationalists and Oxbridge radicals have, by their animated talk of relevance, only provided rear-guard support to the inept and the unethical. I grant the good intentions of these missionaries. They want to save the heathens from what they themselves have suffered in the West and from which the heathens never have had the good or bad fortune of suffering. But the targets of their compassion are being difficult. While some of them are exploiting the padres to rationalise both their incompetence and their lack of professional commitment, others are neither willing to accept the idea of 'original irrelevance' modelled after the idea of original sin nor the incentives for a quick conversion.

As a product of the rapid and stifling atmosphere of Indian universities, I prefer to belong to the second category. In my painful, dreary journey through the wilderness that is Indian social science I have learnt to distrust the marginal man who, awe-struck by a country which he is told is his own and yet finds so distant, imputes subtle ideological and scholarly differences where none exists, imagines an Indian clientele on the lines of the western students and professionals he has known, projects his personal battle for autonomy and his defensive attempts to build self esteem on to the academia as a whole.

Saberwal could not have cited a worse example. The real problem stems not from a wrong choice between Palo Alto and Simla. It stems from the difference between those who can make this choice and those who think this to be a choice between two summer resorts. That is why most of the difficulties IIAS has faced in its short life have had little to do with its 'pull' as an institution: they have ranged all the way from the relative power of the administrators and the scholars to the struggle for filing cabinets, typing facilities, and cyclostyling paper. That is why one of the only two Îndians who may have had the choice between Palo Alto and IIAS was invited to the former, whereas the IIAS never responded, beyond

formal acknowledgement, to his request for a place there at his own expense.*

But the fellows of IIAS are fortunate. They do not have to cook or shop for their director or pay bribes for university examinership. Others have to. Only this year, in my erstwhile college, two students were beaten up while entering the college library because other students thought they were advertising their scholarship. And, this week, the invitation from an university to a friend of mine to teach there was withdrawn because he had the temerity to support the content of Kothari's and my SEMINAR (157) articles. To the extent such circumstances are the mode in the country and not the choice between Indian and western advanced centres, the concept of relevance is relevant only as the magical slogan of wieth doctors dancing around a moribund social science, as the most successful professional gambit of recent years, and ultimately as a protection racket.

The problem basically is simple. We have amongst us well-meaning representatives of a bygone era when a determined rejection of whatever momentarily seemed non-Indian and a search for self-identity were the dominant themes in Indian politics. They are playing out the academic version of a game popularised by the nineteenth century reformers and revivalists. This game has its historical value. But plebians like me are cussed enough to believe that both their diagnosis and their therapy relate to a chosen few, that one pays homage as much by imitation as by phobic rejection (remember the pruriently detailed descriptions of sin by some Catholic theologists of medieval Europe and our very own Dashkumarcharit), and that one will perhaps have to wait for someone to do a Gandhi in the social sciences.

Meanwhile, if we take the establishment radicals and the new nationalists too seriously we shall only have to, like P. C. Joshi (SEMINAR, 157), quote Karl Deutsch to establish the relevance of Gandhi and use Myrdal, Leontief, Kuznets and Galbraith to market the idea of relevance in India.

This actually is the crux of my difference with Saberwal, Joshi, Kothari and the rest. This difference is neither ideological nor scientific, but generational.

Ashis Nandy

Centre for the Study of Developing Societies Delhi.

^{*}In all, four Indians have been to Palo Alto. Saberwal considers all except these social scientists 'leftovers,' (SEMINAR, 157) with whom one cannot build institutions. Strange are the ways of the committed.

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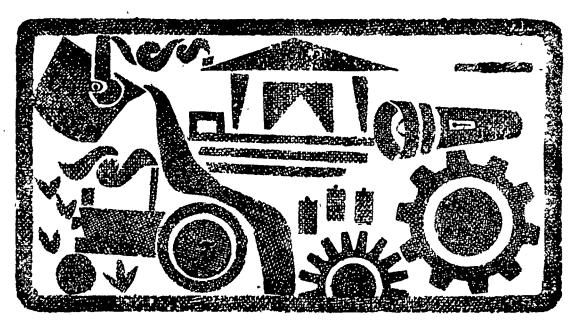
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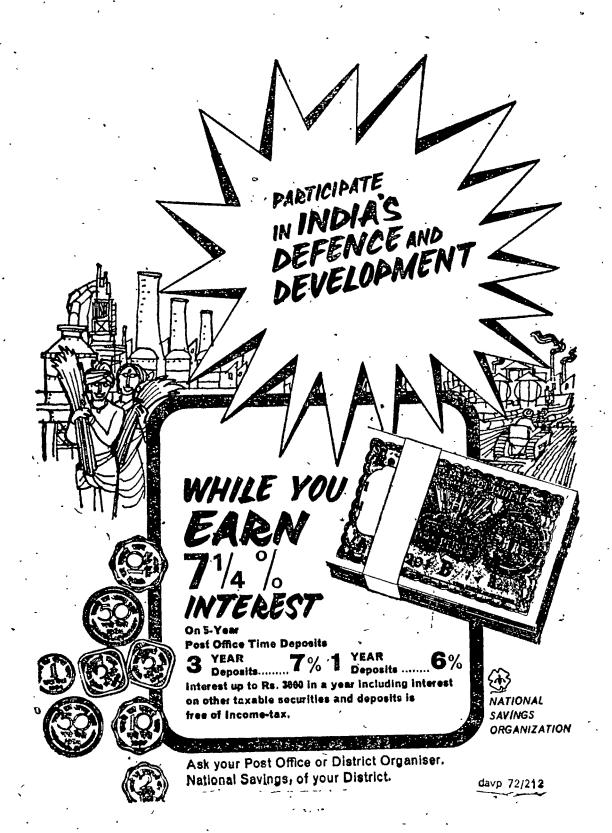
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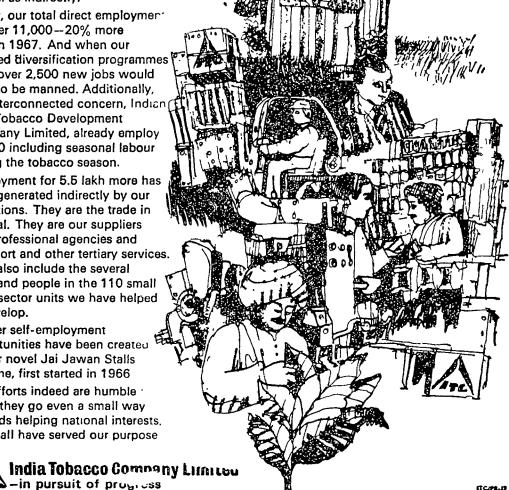
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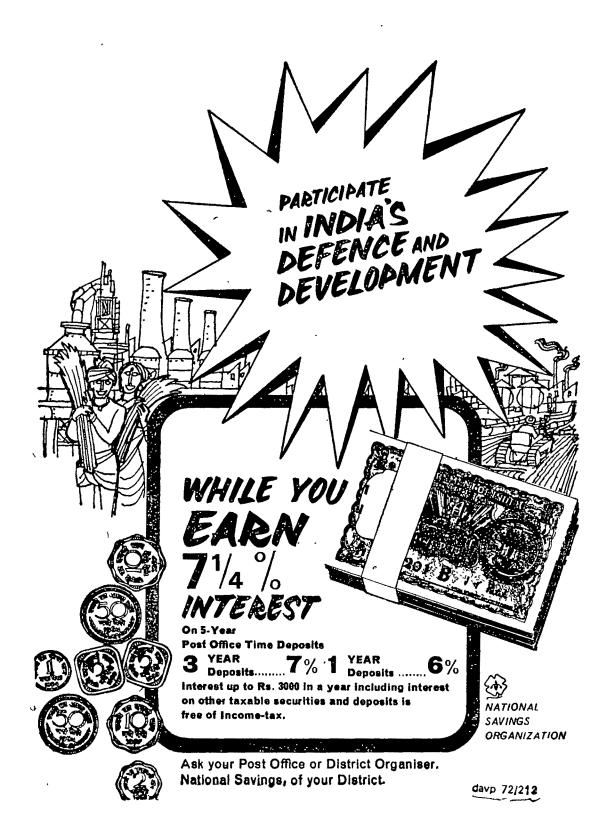
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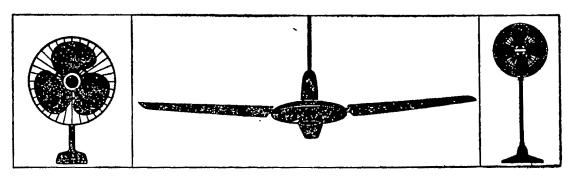
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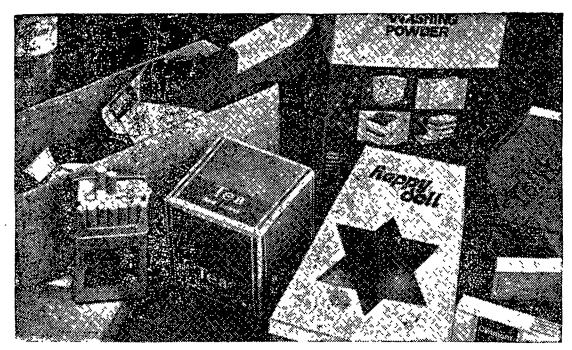




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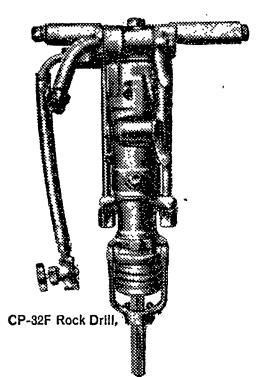
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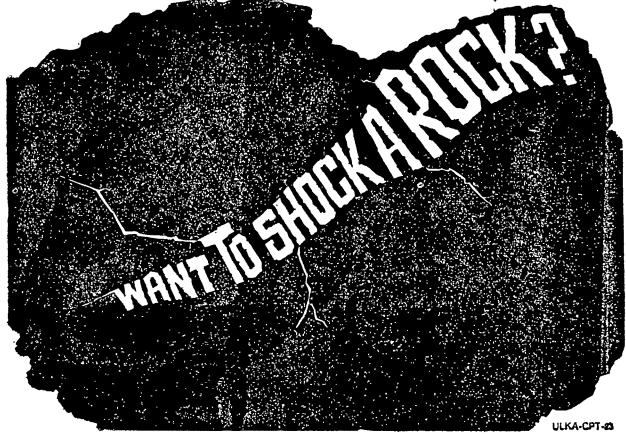
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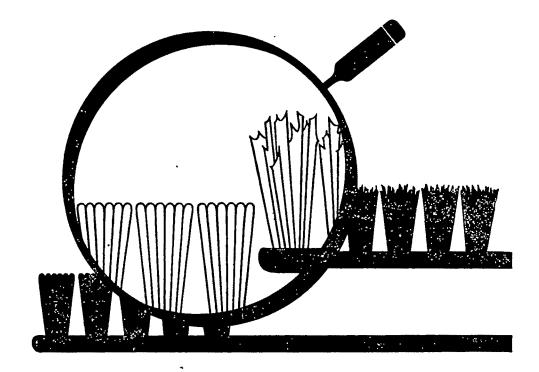
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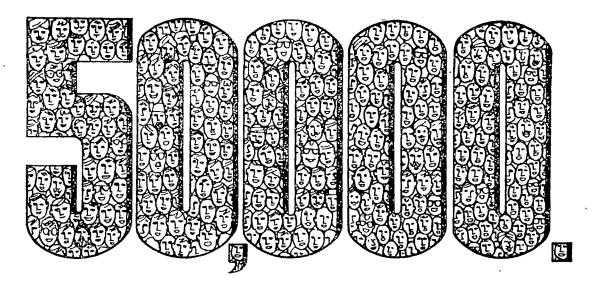
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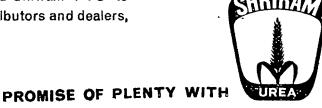


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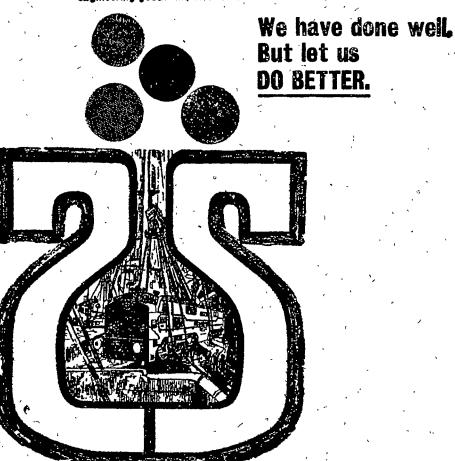


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TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING

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BOOKS

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FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography compiled by D. C. Sharma

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The problem

AFTER surviving many economic and political crises, we are celebrating the completion of twenty-five years of our democratic Republic. For a people brought up to believe that economic growth consolidates democratic institutions, this anniversary should help us realise that such simplistic and easy equations have little relevance; indeed, in social history, very often the opposite is true.

In India, we now realise that the complexities of continental politics and continental growth patterns become more forbidding as we develop. Each solution generates a new set of problems. The mounting aspirations of the people also create a new quality of pressure on policy making. There can be no going back to the 'good old days'. But the complacency which once characterised our attitudes has now been replaced by an exaggerated apprehension. This is natural. The failure to anticipate difficulties has heightened anxieties.

What is remarkable is that the democratic system has survived, despite a generally status quo economic situation. If literacy percentages are up, the actual number of illiterates has increased. If development has taken place, poverty in quantum has increased. If many more thousands throng the universities, they come out less equipped to earn a living than ever before. 'God must be Indian'! exclaim startled visitors. The thought is excited by the extraordinary contrasts which exist side by side in India, contrasts which in any other country would spark anger and violence. But we shouldn't imagine that anger and violence can be forever quietened by the chanting of populist ministerial slogans.

Obviously, the Indian is ideal material for the 'hastening slowly' philosophy which underpins any political system in which dissent is embodied and cherished. However, the supposedly wise and patient Indian cannot be expected to tolerate a status quo situation in perpetuity. Indeed, we

are today witnessing the end of the first phase in our democratic experiment.

The status quo situation, in which the broad picture of affluence and poverty remained relatively unaffected by growth, has been stirred up by the recent shifts in power alignments and personalities within the amorphous Congress Party which continues to straddle the country. Quite clearly, a new economic balance will have to be found to underpin the new democratic stirring in the system—and it has to be found fairly soon, considering the explosive tensions which are building at the level of the mass base under the outward confidence and calm generated by the successful solution of the Bangladesh problem.

So far, the debate on economic-political issues, more intense than it has ever been during these years of freedom, is confined to a traditional kind of clash between the ideologies of the Right and Left. We continue to excite ourselves over the relative merits of the private and public sector, over the burdens of direct and indirect taxation, over licensing policies and their relation to monopoly, productivity and paralysis, and over a host of other related issues. We continue to imagine that the confrontations along which we discuss are designed to resolve the problems of poverty now threatening the stability of our democratic system. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is emphasised by the limited surveys so far undertaken of the living conditions of our people. In other words, both Left and Right continue to assume a framework which is conservative in time and foreign in concept.

If this democratic continental federation, with its many and varied communities and aspirations, is to survive, the growth model by which we have experimented these last twenty-five years has to be changed. Under the present approach, every advance throws up a multitude of new crises, crises which will overwhelm our democratic system if we do not change the quality

^{*}Based on an article originally published over a year ago.

of our development, or the value system which designs the priorities which structure our society.

In other words, Indian democracy demands a growth model which ensures substantial changes in the basic living condition of the mass of our people within their life-time. To continue as at present, with the middle classes in the saddle, is to place too much faith in transmigration as the promise of fulfilment for the people! Our people want their life to change in their life-time, and if it cannot be done in a democracy they will seek other ways.

We have always assumed that such an objective is woolly and unrealistic. But is it? Certainly, if we continue in intellectual subservience to the borrowed concepts which we have proclaimed as sacrosanct in our twenty-five years of freedom. Certainly not, if we take courage and attempt an overhaul of objectives and the steps needed to achieve those objectives.

While we are reviewing the critical question of a new economic balance for our democratic transition, we should always keep in mind that the answer has to be found within the context of Indian experience at the base of the economic structure: the peasant, the craftsman, the worker, the student, the unemployed, the homeless and the hungry. To formulate the answer in rigid rightist or leftist frames, as is the prevailing style, could be unrealistic; the polarisations inherent in such postures would be a threat to the unity of this multi-cultural, multi-national subcontinent. And, yet, both projected stereotyped solutions fail to relate to the actual reality.

Then, again, the lesson of Bangladesh is not lost upon us. To be relevant, the political ideology has to be sufficiently sensitive to federal pressures even as it is dynamic, thrusting and mass-oriented. Anything less would be dismissed by even our own tolerant and patient people as a hoax devised to serve the more fortunate regions or individuals in our society.

How is it possible to create a political philosophy sufficiently dynamic—revolutionary in

concept—to guarantee the stability of our democracy?

The way to go about this enormous task is to state categorically that every theory and plan will be tested on the basis of what it is likely to do for the mass of the people. Mahatma Gandhi had such a 'talisman'. Our present leadership needs to devise one: something in the nature of a 'a mass line'.

It is not a populist slogan. It bases itself on solving the problems of the people at the grassroots, within a value system which emphasises a simple and just social order, hastening slowly but surely, testing achievements at the mass base, avoiding the pitfalls experienced by more advanced societies.

I believe it is possible to achieve this critical correction in our thought and action if we attempt it now-that is before the wrong values of the wasteful, affluent society have taken over. We talk glibly about bridging the many gulfs between our people, and of the need to be egalitarian in outlook and policy, but we do everything possible through planning processes, rules and regulations, and value systems, to increase the gulfs. Twenty-five years of freedom have not seen any improvement in this economicsocial stratification. Instead, we are creating amongst our young, dreams of affluence which can neither be fulfilled in our economic conditions, nor are worthy of fulfilment. The craving for a consumer society is growing—among, believe it or not, both Left and Right-and so is the frustration.

The leadership continues to flourish slogans which confuse the goals and make them recede further and further away from the horizon. And now a growing impatience which creates cynicism about policy pronouncements on 'socialism', generates bitterness and anger which easily build

to violence. The shadow of Calcutta haunts many an Indian city.

The seventies will be dominated by the debate around this central issue of how to plan the future. No party can afford to neglect it. No party can any longer run for remedies to economic models which have little relevance to Indian continental realities. All parties will be compelled to exercise themselves over the evolution of a new growth model which can sustain our federal democratic system.

I am of the opinion that the model must be based upon a mass line. And a mass line, to make an impact on today's situation, must cut across the usual polarising slogans of the Right and Left and focus on the key problems of the people. The 'base' should become the centre of concern. In this manner, the mass line becomes the ideology of a dynamic, new formation. It is the area of common national agreement and it is enough to keep us busy for a long time.

What are the objectives of such a mass line?

- (a) Control and stabilise the prices of the necessities of mass consumption without which peace on the production front will break down
- (b) Try and rid the Indian psyche of the idea of a job being something fixed, confined and constant Create jobs on a mass scale for engineers, students, landless, through land armies and rural works programmes, which will build immense capital resources throughout the land, lessen the gap between town and village, provide a visible example of action-oriented programmes and socially transform human relationships in town and village.
- (c) Give priority to an interlinked system for mass housing and mass transport at the expense of private housing and private transport. No private homes for the more affluent until the poor have been housed, no 'small' cars until mass transport needs are fulfilled. Slogans of 'mass housing' have not provided a roof for our people in the last 25 years: small cars have not lessened the trauma of people going to work as the cities expand to unmanageable proportions.
- (d) Spell out the perspectives for mass literacy and competence in various technical skills in relation to the capacities demanded by the developing situation. Education has to be pulled out of the universities to serve the real needs of our people at the base. A radically different approach to education has to be evolved, gathering the new communication power of radio and TV.
- (e) Break the vicious neglect of the village, its life and productivity by bringing more modern technology to the village craftsman

and helping him to link to the national market. His skill has to be considered a national resource, to be helped and exploited Japan's experience is vital in this. Magnetic points have to be established in the rural areas to halt the aimless migration into the towns.

(f) Democratise and decentralise the present administrative system by making it result-oriented, so that specialised experience available outside the system can be utilised with proper delegation at critical points instead of the present generalist, hierarchical, bureaucratic cadres rooted in preserving the status quo. Wider participation with responsibility should be the effort.

The moment the bare outlines of a mass line to underpin our democracy are sketched, so many of the priorities by which we have lived these twenty-five years are brought into question, from how much steel we require to how many graduates, how many committees, how many cars and so on Then political and economic reforms come under disciplined scrutiny. The mass line becomes the motivator of policies and perspectives An experimental application of this approach to a narrow area of development immediately throws up a new frame of operation.

I believe it is possible to achieve the necessary corrections in our policies and implementations through democratic, peaceful sanctions if we begin to stir ourselves out of the old grooves. And a critical point of stirring is obviously the Planning Commission. It must become a major weapon in the structural transformation of India. It is here that the development framework for the next 25 years must immediately be detailed, as also the system of implementation at various levels. Such an objective demands an immediate, drastic overhaul of the Commission. The economics of democracy in a developing society must be understood more creatively at Yojana Bhavan. No longer can we rest content with injecting radicalism into the content of planning without drastically altering the frame of This has been our gravest error. planning. What is attempted so far is nowhere near

Our democracy is shaping very differently from the models in the West with which we have been familiar. Our economic system, too, must find its roots in its own soil and throw up concepts which make sense in our social setting Political and economic leadership must combine to attack the problem of poverty and despair in India without cant and double talk.

In other words, the essential elements of a developing society have already been nurtured. Only a catalyst is needed to crystalise a stable democracy. And that is a mass line. . .

Fable and reality

RAVI J MATTHAI

(A bureaucracy is compelled to adopt new roles for new tasks which are determined by a government in the competitive environment of a new political democracy. These roles and tasks require new skills, new patterns of behaviour and new structures to a hieve the objectives).

THE Fable: Once upon a time there was a well-intentioned elephant which was being trained to walk on eggs without cracking them, by a group of equally well-intentioned, though not always consistent, trainers. The trainers owned the elephant and the circus. It was, perhaps, unfortunate that the training took place in the centre of the circus ring with a large audience in constant attendance. The presence of the audience was determined by the socio-politico-economic environment over which the trainer-owners had little control. An expert who the trainers consulted had dismissed this as an 'exogenous variable'. The essence of this advice was 'lump it'.

The elephant was intelligent but, quite naturally, many eggs were broken. Every time an egg broke the audience would scream its disapproval and throw tomatoes at the trainers. The elephant would panic and the trainers, fearing that the audience's barrage of tomatoes would increase, prodded the poor elephant harder and harder, and certainly much harder than the

training warranted. The more intense the barrage of tomatoes, the harder they prodded. The harder they prodded, the more were the eggs that were broken by the elephant. This (an expert had once described it to them) they recognized to be a 'vicious circle'. The training went on until the ring looked like, what the Parsees would call, a very large 'tamata par eeda'. And bear in mind that this is very costly considering the current prices of eggs and tomatoes.

The elephant's problem was that he could not walk on eggs without breaking them. This he knew. But he also learnt to hate the smell of broken eggs even more than the prods. 'I can't avoid the prods', he thought, 'but I can avoid the smell of broken eggs by not breaking them'. So the elephant learnt to stand still and listen to the screaming audience and bear the prods with the patience typical of its kind.

One day the trainers had a meeting to discuss their problem. An expert had once told them that they should always manage by objectives. Their objective was clear—the elephant must walk on eggs without breaking them. This objective was not being achieved. Their first reaction was to blame the elephant. So they gave it a few extra prods for good measure.

During the discussion that followed a number of possible courses of action emerged.

'Let us find an elephant that has already been trained to walk on eggs. We could collaborate with Barnum and Bailey or Ring Ling who might have such an animal.' A trainer was sent to negotiate the collaboration agreement.

'Why can't we find a lighter elephant'? they asked. However, they were stymied by the question—'How light should an elephant be to stand on an egg and not break it'? Nevertheless, a trainer was sent to search for a feasible elephant.

'I think', said a trainer, 'that we need to develop eggs with a tougher shell, or may be a more plastic shell, or perhaps with a shape that gives to a greater resilience,' A trainer was sent to undertake such technological research as would develop a hen that could lay an egg upon which an elephant could stand.

The remaining trainers thought that they would mingle with the audience and attempt to persuade them that the problem was a difficult one and that they, the audience, should be patient since no stone was being left unturned in their, the trainers', search for a solution.

After a while the trainers reassembled.

'Neither Barnum and Bailey's nor Ring Ling have an elephant trained to walk on eggs'.

'The lightest full grown elephant I could find weighs 344.25 kgs. It hadn't been fed for quite some time and certainly wouldn't have the energy to walk the distance between the gate and the egg.'

'I regret that the hens will not co-operate. I even introduced pulverized titanium and polyethelene into their feed. While their droppings showed a marked increase in tensile strength, the eggshells remain unaffected. They refuse to absorb these ingredients into their reproductive system. Given our objectives and the sociopolitico-ecnomic environment, I hesitate to suggest that the dropp-

ings be used as a basic material for the synthetic textile industry.'

Meanwhile the tomatoes continued to fly.

The trainers thought and thought and thought. Eventually they came to a unanimous conclusion: "There is no solution to our problem. We must change our objective. Our two constraints are, firstly, that we still have the elephant, perhaps a little the worse for wear, but we can't afford to throw it away. Secondly, there is the socio-politico-economic environment over which we have no control.'

Given this excellent assessment of the situation, they turned to the audience and triumphantly announced their decision: 'Our new objective will be to teach the elephant to walk the tightrope.'

And so they started over again with the elephant, the audience, the tomatoes, and a tight rope fifty feet above the ring. No eggs this time! Using eggs was a silly idea anyway.

On the first day the elephant fell and broke its neck.

There are many morals to this fable:

First moral: Don't manage by objectives—question them.

Second moral: You can frame objectives to defeat them.

Third moral: If you try hard and long enough with such objectives, you can achieve a stage at which you have nothing to manage.

Fourth moral: If you have nothing to manage the problem ceases to be (which of course saves a lot of trouble if you can afford to lose the elephant).

Fifth moral: Too many trainers can scramble the eggs.

Sixth moral: It is not enough to allocate resources. You should understand their limitations.

Seventh moral: Critical socio-politico-economic audiences can create intervening variables between the owner-trainers and the trained which confuse motivation; and 'motivation' is a messy enough subject anyway.

Eighth moral: Don't use elephants

where white mice will do.

Ninth moral: Don't put all your eggs under an elephant's feet.

Tenth moral: If the elephant hadn't died, the audience would have killed it.

I am sure you can think of many more morals, but work them out for yourself.

The Reality: Government has built a massive structure to formulate, plan and implement its policies. The government's objective is to raise the standard of living of the masses through policies of redistribution, programmes of development and the regulation of resources, processes and opportunities within the framework of parliamentary democracy. The larger the 'mass' of the market, the larger tends to be the line of control between the policy makers and the target population. This, together with the rapidly broadening scope of government's activities creates the massive structure which now exists. The longer the line of control and the communication link, the more is the need to delegate decision The massif has grown making. by accretion rather than by design and as it continues to grow in size and complexity the problem of redesigning the structure and implementing such a design becomes all but insuperable. Each part develops its own vested interest and resists changes that threaten its power. The policy makers sitting on the peak of this massif, have an unenviable job.

Any reasonably responsive person working in a task system will instinctively develop a sense for what is appropriate or inappropriate for the achievement of the task. If the inappropriate system is difficult to change, such a person will find ways to circumvent the inappropriate constraints, assuming he wants to get the job done. If he is not motivated to accomplish the task, these inappropriate constraints

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are the best possible excuse not to do so. It is, however, a sad state of affairs when praise for a government servant's efficiency is expressed in terms of his being able to circumvent rules and regulations in order to get the job done. He is praised for being 'unbureaucratic' in a task that does not call for a bureaucratic structure or culture. But, if the constraints are inappropriate, then remove them!

which to circumvent its own rigidities. The bureaucratic departmental system is thought inappropriate for many operational tasks and the most commonly used alternative was the creation of 'autonomous' organisations. These were the Boards, such as Railways and Post and Telegraphs, commissions such as Atomic Energy, Power and Water, University Grants; later came the autonomous corporations, educa-tional institutions and the like, and today is the day of the holding company. In our egalitarian society there is perhaps as much validity in the thought of preventing the concentration \mathbf{of} administrative power as there is in the policy of preventing the concentration of economic power. However, the question of appropriate or inappropriate structures, practices and processes has now become entangled with the administrative battle for power, so that the defence of power by any administrative group gets associated in the public mind with the defence of certain practices. This may not be so. They do what they know and if they know not what they do, they can learn.

Though new structures were brought into being, the bureaucrat was often used to man the new structure. The uproar was considerable against the bureaucrat and eventually he was given the option, in the public sector, of joining industry or reverting to government. On the other hand, many of the new organisational forms operated under the control of an administrative ministry. This is frequently perceived as a further source of bureaucratic interference and con-The bureaucrat is much maligned and often unfairly. If the bureaucrat is given the job of controlling enterprises he cannot be blamed for doing so in the manner he knows best. If, however, he is jealous of preserving his administrative power he will, despite anything in the article of association, endeavour to use his regulating authority by the formal or informal means at his disposal. In his position, so would anyone else.

The system itself creates ways in company with the Chairman as Secretary of the Ministry will tend to isolate the bureaucrat entirely from this area of decision-making and perhaps, in some instances, places the latter in a subservient position. So the focus of power is transferred from the secretariat to the holding company. The assumption is that the people who man the holding company will be chosen on the basis of their managerial, financial and other appropriate skills and that therefore the holding company will be better able to plan, delegate authority to the subsidiary companies and control them more effectively. These are assumptions.

> Since the new generation of holding companies is about to be born, time will tell whether these hopes are realised. It will depend amongst other factors, on the success of the subsidiaries, (success seems to breed delegation) the quality of the people in charge, the relationship of the Minister and the Chairman, the posture which the Minister adopts in Parliament in defence of his managers. In fact the Cabinet as a whole will have to be committed to the operation of the new system if it is not to become the political football of an inter-service and inter-departmental power conflict. The holding company cannot work in isolation. It will have to deal with other ministries, particularly those with so-called staff functions, which ministries will be manned in the traditional way. If conflicts arise for underlying reasons other than the merits of the case, it is likely that these would have to be ironed out between the ministers concerned. This will in turn affect the relationship between the ministers and their staff.

Although there may be the greatest respect for the quality and

achievements of the general administrative service, the service places itself in an increasingly vulnerable position by asserting a pre-eminence which may not be in accord with the gradually shrinking proportion of governmental activities with which it is equipped to deal. The individual members of the service are of very high calibre and if they wish to retain a pre-eminence they need to re-organise and train themselves for the new tasks. Even so it will be difficult to justify the reservation of senior positions to the exclusion of others with equal merit working in all sectors of governmental activity. The general administrators should take the lead in the reorganisation of the government's overall personnel policy. If they do not, the need still remains, and the initiative then can only come from the highest point of executive power in the country, the Prime Minister.

A considerable urgency attaches to this. For years there have been lengthy and heated discussions of questions of more 'autonomy' and greater 'delegation of authority' to those chosen to accomplish specific tasks. But little has resulted. This is not surprising. In today's somewhat murky situation it is difficult to delegate power when everyone is scrambling for it, particularly across the boundaries of vested groups. The soft option can be taken in assuming away the problem by calling it a fact of life. Or the hard choice can be made by redefining government's tasks and functions, reorganising the structure of the operating systems, and clearly revising the government's policies concerning the recruitment. selection, training, motivation, evaluation and career development of those who have to manage these systems.

In a task system 'autonomy' and 'delegation of authority', are regarded. like motherhood, as good. It could be asked—'Authority to do what? Better, worse, or the same?' People must be motivated to exercise the authority and have the skills that the task requires. In their perception they must have the confidence of those above them, and they should be developed for the task so that they have confidence in

themselves. In turn they should develop those below them and build their confidence. This process moves downwards. The mod words today 'participation' resulting in 'involvêment'. 'Participation' always sideways or upwards. You 'participate' in the decision of your boss and so feel 'involved', with a clearer perception of the task, its circumstances and what is expected of you. 'Participation' downwards is 'interference'. You wish your boss would keep out of your hair, but your motivation improves considerably if you get entangled in

Perhaps the greatest degree of delegation exists in the traditional roles which the general administrative service performs. It is often said that there is a wide delegation of authority to the District Collector and that his ability to use this authority depends partly on whether he has carefully studied and knows the 'book of words' which he was expected to learn at the point of induction into the service. These 'books of words' are the result of generations of experience of very capable administrators. On the other hand, the District Development Officer is perhaps not so fortunate. By definition he is concerned with developmental tasks which implies that he breaks new ground and is, at that level, the government's 'change agent'. He must work closely with the local self-government system which may be responsible for the fulfilment of development objectives in the district. The principle is that the local community must be involved and feel responsible. The District Development Officer is the executive who must help achieve tasks by developing this cooperation and motivation. It is far more difficult to define his role, determine his responsibility and measure his performance. The village level worker has the roughest time of all with thirteen or so government programmes to implement. It is common experience that, in a multi-product company. irrespective of corporate goals, the salesman will concentrate on the product which is the easiest to sell.

If the district executive is to be effective, he must be capable of

offering to the Zilla Parishad much more than commonsensical advice. He needs a strong planning base, an effective information system and the skills needed to organise what has to be done.

If delegation of authority is desirable to move the appropriate points of decision-making closer to the 'grass roots' so that the tasks are more capable of accomplishment, the appropriate system, culture, and practices must be developed. This description suggests two forms of delegation—delegation by regulation and delegation by control.

Delegation by regulation is relevant to jobs concerned with the preservation of an order. It is a task in which there has been sufficient experience so that a large number of situations which may arise are foreseen and the corresponding norms of executive behaviour can be charted. It is a job which requires a substantial degree ot standardised behaviour in a variety of circumstances, where errors of action can transgress the constitutional rights of the general citizenry, where the actions of large numbers of people have to be controlled by requirements of law enacted to keep the society stable. Accountability is in terms of the prevention of mistakes and misuse. For many in the field this is the rule of law. For many in government staff positions, this is the law of rules. For those in the field there is a considerable scope for initiative within the guidelines, rules and regulations by which he

Where the law of rules prevails, ends and means tend to get confused and the achievement of tasks might become less important than satisfying regulatory requirements. Those who make rules should give more careful thought to the circumstances, of the tasks in the context of which such rules will be applied, and to the executive who is confronted by the noting on the file that a particular course of action, important and useful though it may be, cannot be pursued because it is not entirely in accordance with H.S.S.E., No. UMD—2471—6681/M dated 9/12/71 read with H.S.S.E., No. USG—2471/145887/M dated 20/12/72 modified by H.S.S.E., EST—1471/5641-N dated 10/1/72, EST—2771/95352-I dated 15/2/72 & EST—2271/113923-0 dated 25/2/72.

In the context of delegation by control it is assumed that activities are planned and that there are a few critical variables in the plan which are the primary indicators as to whether the task is being accomplished or not. It is these critical variables that a supervisor will watch and the flow of information will be so structured. It is assumed that the objectives and constraints will be stated and that, during the period over which plan performance will be evaluated, the executive is left to get on with the job. The wider the variations in circumstances and the greater the uncertainties, the lighter and the more sensitive need be the controls. The new organisational forms have no sanctity as such. Much will depend on how they are managed.

It is common in the operation of government systems, and by their historical development, that the culture of delegation by regulation for the prevention of occurrences, intrudes upon the job which must create an output and for which delegation by control is the appropriate culture. Admittedly, there is a wide grey area in which, though one of the cultures should predominate, an element of the other is necessary because of the needs of a political democracy. But without this distinction the attitude to and performance of tasks becomes confused. A common cause of this confusion is the use of people brought up in the regulatory culture for creative development work and the corresponding institution building, without providing them with adequate opportunities to reorient their administrative styles.

If a creative and productive relationship is to exist between our massif and the masses it is not enough to move appropriate decision-making points closer to the 'market place'. It will be necessary to review the entire organisation structure and personnel policy of the government.

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Holding the price line

ASHOK MITRA

AT the political level, there seems to be a sneering unconcern over rising prices. It is almost as if price fetishism is a typical middle class vice, and the politician is no better. For, has not the ruling party, in recent months, moved from triumph to triumph, has it not received—in 1971 as well as in 1972—a massive mandate from the people, despite whatever has been happening on the price front? The stiff resistance to all suggestions for a lowering of the procurement prices for foodgrains no doubt stems from this conviction that, by and large, the Indian masses are price-insensitive so long as supplies are maintained,

somehow they will survive and prosper.

Perhaps, a few amongst the politicians will go even further: in agriculture whatever advances in output have occurred in recent years have taken place in an environment of rising prices, which have shored up incentive for the farmers; maybe what we need for industrial resurgence too is a lateral spread of this phenomenon of continuous price escalation: therefore, don't go near to the economists, pay heed to your instinct.

And yet, as long as conventional ethics continues to hold sway, economists will have to do their duty.

A regime of spiralling prices, they have to warn, will frustrate for ever the prospects of a healthy balance of payments and, therefore, economic self-sufficiency; continuous price rise, they have to warn, will vitiate investment decisions and thus retard industrial growth; inflation, in addition, will tilt the structure of income distribution further against the weaker sections of the community. And it will be a dereliction of their social obligation if economists do not point out that high prices of foodgrains, contrary to what politicians believe or pretend to believe —adversely affect the overwhelming majority of the rural population. The National Sample Survey data show that while almost the entire supply of cereals consumed by the landless labourers is purchased from the market, even the small farmers —that is those having up to 5 acres of land—have to come to the mar-ket for nearly four-fifths of their annual consumption of cereals.

At the mid-point of 1972, the level of wholesale prices of foodgrains is more than 10 per cent higher than what was at the midpoint of 1971. The rise in the wholesale price index for several other consumer articles, including sugar, milk and milk products and vegetables is even sharper. If we had an efficient index of prices at the retail level-the level which is relevant for the masses—the price increase over the year would no doubt have appeared to have been of a larger dimension. And once one takes into account the regional variations, there is no question that the phenomenon of spiralling prices in some parts of the country has already given rise to the spectre of galloping inflation.

Is it enough to take shelter behind the plea that given the basic lack of balance between production and demand in several important commodities, nothing much can be done in the short period? Is it that metaphysics is superior to economics, and the weaker elements in society, who are directly affected by rising prices, can for the present be quietened by the lullaby of the fifth five-year plan? It is fantastic that even as prices have been soaring, the quantum of foodgrains supplied through the public distri-

bution has gone on declining over recent years? Cannot one propose that while such nihilism may have its own charm, a small beginning be made to ensure the regular supply of essential consumer goods at reasonable prices at least to the bottom one-fifth of the population?

If the political will is there, it should not be difficult to implement such a scheme. In the paragraphs which follow, a very brief sketch of what can be done to attain this objective is outlined. The operational feasibility of a proposal of this nature need not be doubted; but, in the process, certain class interests are bound to be affected; the issue of political feasibility will therefore have to be separately examined.

To begin with, the object must be set on a low key: pre-emption of a modest proportion of the total supply of the more important essential articles for distribution amongst the least privileged groups in society. The fact that a large part of the current difficulties with prices is on account of a fundamental imbalance between supply demand need not be disputed. We can however try to soften the impact of this imbalance on the less fortunate sections of the community by earmarking for their use a fraction of the total availability of the commoner articles of consumption. In most cases, were the public sector to commandeer even 10 to 15 per cent of the supply of a particular item, the rest of the market would start behaving, and prices would assume more reasonable levels.

The articles covered by the scheme may include foodgrains, sugar, salt, edible oils, a few common varieties of cloth, kerosene, toilet and washing soap, etc. A second list, of a lesser order of importance, may consist of bicycles, tyres and tubes, torch lights and batteries, cigarettes, razor blades and certain ordinary medicines. Initially, the emphasis should be on catering to the more essential items; only after some experience has been gained may the number of commodities be enlarged. Of course, a certain minimum turnover will be necessary for a ration or fair price shop to be able to break even. But It is for the shop itself to decide how wide should be the range of goods it should keep. It would however be prudent to keep the sights deliberately low in the early stages.

Since four-fifths of the population are in the villages—and the level of poverty is very much more abysmal there, despite the so-called Green Revolution—, the focus in wholesale and retail distribution has to be on enlarging significantly the scale of operations in the countryside. The existing network of ration and fair price shops has therefore to be drastically tilted in favour of the rural areas; the number of shops in any case has to increase. The range of goods to be supplied to the shops will have to vary from region to region; even within a region, depending upon the season or the composition of the population in particular pockets, the list of goods to be offered will have to be varied.

At the retail end, surveillance must be exercised to prevent excessive margins; where necessary, nationalisation of the retail trade, too, for a part of the aggregate supply of the more important essential goods may have to be considered. It is however in the stage of wholesale distribution that distributive excesses are more rampant. It may therefore be desirable to weed out private wholesale trade in entirety from the particular segment of the market we have in mind.

The function of wholesale trading will still need to be performed. A catalytic agent must collect the commodities from the points of production (or procurement) and reach them to the retail locations. One possible solution would be a consortium of the existing State trading agencies, for example, the Food Corporation of India, the Cotton Corporation of India, the Jute Corporation of India, the State Trading Corporation, the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, etc. Such a consortium could direct the individual agencies to extend their specific activities to the wholesale field, thus economising on overheads. In the absense of proper coordination, the consortium idea may not however work; the

benefits of economies of scale may not immediately accrue either. A better alternative would perhaps be a separate wholesale trading organisation in the public sector for handling the ear-marked portion of the supplies of the essential articles.

This organisation must be able to demonstrate that its margins would be less than what the private trade is charging at present, or would continue to charge for the 85 to 90 per cent of the supplies that would still be left to its care. It is not enough to assert that econòmies of scale will bring about this denouement; instances are galore where such economies have not emerged. A normal—essential precaution would be to discourage the practice of appointing private parties as commission agents for the wholesale organisation. The organisation must have, at all levels, its own expertise and functionaries: it must also be able to deploy the personnel available to it in a manner which is conducive to competitive efficiency.

There are three principal stages in wholesale marketing: purchase, storage and movement. At each of these stages, the public wholesale organisation should be able to quote rates and charge margins which compare favourably with the quotation of private traders operating in the field. That is to say, the unit cost of procurement, the unit cost of storage and, finally, the unit cost of movement from the purchase or storage point to the retail distribution points must in each case not exceed that of private operators.

In order that this objective could be realised, purchases must be made, so far as possible, at the source of output. In the case of foodgrains, the wholesale agency will of course take over the supplies from the Food Corporation of India; for the other commodities, the agency should buy directly from the major producers. In case it is possible to purchase at a number of different locations—even if this might involve transactions with more than one manufacturer—,the practice should be encouraged. In other words, the endeavour should be to decentralise purchases, with-

out at the same time sacrificing the benefits of bulk buying.

Storage will involve hiring of space as well as construction, and making the concomitant arrangements. Initially, it may not be wise to invest inordinately large funds on capital expenditure for storage. Until as long as the organisation has not broken even, it may be preferable to rent space. The total demand for storage in the country will not after all increase as a result of the government's entry into wholesale trading. What will happen is that a part of the stocks previously stored by the private wholesale trade will now be stored by the government agency. Where necessary, the government may use penal powers to force the owners of godowns to place them at the disposal of the public sector agency at reasonable rent.

The number of retail points to be serviced across the country will have to be determined. For example, if, on the average, in each district 300 retail points have to be covered, there may have to be correspondingly at least 10 wholesale outlets. This would mean roughly 3,500 wholesale depots across the country.

The average overhead cost for maintaining a wholesale net-work of this magnitude has to be worked out. This cost will vary inversely with the aggregate size of the turnover. It will be desirable to have alternative exercises on cost worked out on the basis of varying assumptions in regard to the range and quantity of goods to be channelled through the wholesale outlets.

To illustrate, one such exercise could be on the basis of a programme of annual distribution of eight million tonnes of foodgrains and Rs 1,000 crores worth of other essential commodities. Other exercises could be on the assumption of higher or lower orders of foodgrain distribution and, similarly, higher or lower orders of distribution of other commodities. In yet other exercises, the proposed number of wholesale outlets could be increased or reduced so as to study the impact on the level of overhead

cost. The optimum scale of operations at any point of time would have to be decided upon in the light of these exercises.

A policy of discriminatory pricing may also have to be woven into the scheme of distribution. The agency should have the latitude to transfer a part of the operational cost of distributing grains consumed by the poorer sections, say, bajra or ragi, to the wholesale price of a relatively high-priced grain, say, wheat, or to the wholesale price of an article which has a somewhat lower order of priority, for example, toilet soap. Such discriminatory pricing may also have to be extended as between regions or as between seasons.

Past experience with State trading agencies has been of a mixed nature. While they have served the objective of enabling the State to exercise control over the procurement, exports or imports—as the case may be—of key commodities, their efficiency, as reflected in the unit cost of operations, has left much to be desired. It will hardly make much sense if in attempting to penetrate into the wholesale market for essential arti-cles, the aspect of efficiency is under-emphasised, and the organisation under contemplation has to be subsidised indefinitely. But this need not be its fate provided there is clarity in the objective and in the modus operandi; and provided the government would not mind treading on the toes of certain privileged elements in society.

We come back therefore to the basic question. Wholesale traders as a group constitute a powerful political bloc. Would the government have the courage to take away a part of their business-and, even otherwise, clip their margins? Would the government be prepared to so regulate monetary policy that speculators and wholesale traders are denied profligate credit? Besides, beyond a point no amount of economising on trading margins can provide relief to the masses if rich farmers keep jacking up their prices and manufacturers strive for maximising profit through restrictive operations. In the final analysis, it is all a matter of class relations and class interests.

The village

C. JAIN

TALKING of a mass line in the context of breaking the 'vicious neglect of the village', one cannot help retrospecting about the Community Development movement for two reasons. Firstly, resurrection of the village was its precise aim; secondly, it was the most comprehensive and massive effort of its kind ever to be launched. Alas, today, 'Community Development' has become a dirty word. It is pertinent therefore to look back and probe as to where and why the CD movement fell short of its expectations.

When it was first launched in the early 50's, the CD movement was inspired by soul stirring poetic visions such as—'in the keeping of the village, lies the cradle of the race' (Tagore). But Tagore's imagery and Gandhi's emotion about the village and its vigorous revival merely adorned the slogans adopted by the so-called pioneers of the movement. The actual programme that was designed and the manner of its implementation bore no semblance to the cherished ideals. The whole concept of community development was itself never fully allowed to blossom. Initially, the stress was on 'development'. rather than 'community', and that, too, consisted mainly of some preconceived notions such as the digging of a targeted number of soakage pits and the like. Even this socalled beginning was pushed aside with the pioneers getting obsessed

with panchayati raj which became a substitute for the community!

The most vital point of the philosophy of community development was to regenerate the processby which the community could develop itself and the economy. through its own initiative and leadership. As many observers had pointed out, the most severe cause of the depredation of the village was the continuous shift of the 'cream' of the population to urban centres, thus compounding village poverty. It has, therefore, been long acknowledged that unless the men with talent remain available to lead and assist the village community, the task of regeneration of the village will well-nigh be impossible. The flux to the urban areas

¹ Dr Harold Manon noticed some fifty years ago that the best among the village community were moving away to the town and warned that if this process continued the village would 'tend to become duller and duller from generation to generation and the possibility of improvement more and more remote'. (Seminar, November 67)

Again, Sir John Russell pointed out some twenty years ago that as villages are unattractive, young men who have ambition leave them for towns. The result is an almost complete absence of good persons who are the best instructors of their neighbours. The vicious circle can be broken only when the village welfare movement becomes a vocation for India's young peoples. Sir John E. Russells' article on 'Food Production Problems in India' in International Affairs, January 1952 quoted by V. T. Krishnamachari in Community Development in India, Publications Division August 1958

is both in search of employment opportunity as well as for a link with a new life. Although seldom accepted, the latter is very important or else there is no explanation why the rural poor suffer the worst kind of living and working conditions in the urban areas.

The 5000 blocks conceived as a part of the CD programme could have served as an effective point of arresting the brain-drain had they been chosen, located and developed with a much wider aim rather than as a mere link in the chain of administrative command.

In the scheme of implementation and investment, too, the in-depth development of these centres should have received priority. Had agroindustrial marketing needs rather than administrative convenience been the basic criteria for the location of these block centres, they would have become popular and vital focal points for the surrounding villages. Agro-industrial marketing activity would have facilitated the growth and development of the processing and servicing industries, thus providing an economic base for essential social and recreational amenities, including higher education and 'modern' employment opportunities, such as branches of banks, insurance companies, agricultural equipment and input supply centres, consumer goods stores, all of the kind associated with large urban areas.

Nılokheri and Faridabad which inspired and stimulated the CD programme in 1952, were both small urban industrial complexes which successfully used their technical knowledge and resources to improve the economic and sociat status of the surrounding rural areas. Each of the two projects had a number of technicians besides the dynamic moving spirits of S. K. Dey and Sudhir Ghosh. But the CD Programme was sought to be developed in a totally opposite direction, i.e., villages developing the blocks under the leadership of tehsildars. The programme set about to undertake some token activity in almost each village in the block, spreading its available limited resources so thinly as to make the investment infructuous—yielding little satisfaction to anyone. Many of the kuccha roads built by the rural population were washed away by the following rains.

Some of the other facilities which withstood the weather, deteriorated owing to the lack of any provision for maintenance. In the basic field of agriculture extension for which the vast army of village workers were deployed, there was little new knowledge or input to be extended. It was a case of the blind leading the non-blind. It was only in the sixties when technological breakthroughs were achieved like the development of new seeds and the availability of fertilizers and pesticides that there was something ineaningful to be introduced. Interestingly, all these new finds have been adopted mainly by the pull of demand from the villages themselves, bypassing almost the entire CD extension organisation.

Again, though the Community Development Programme meant to be comprehensive, embracing industry, agriculture, social services, etc., in reality there was no integrated development. The various ministries and departments of State governments dealing with different subjects, continued to operate their own programmes. The schematic budget of the Community Development Programme had mere token provisions for a wide variety of activities, none of which received adequate funds for development. It can be argued that this limitation was imposed on the Community Development Programme by the reluctance or resistance of the State bureaucracy which did not wish to shed its power of patronage or, to be charitable, did not wish to put all the eggs in the same basket. Whoever may be responsible for imposing the limitations, the fact remains that the programme failed to make a dent on the problems it had promised to resolve.

As can be seen, the massive expansion or extension of the Community Development Programme was more in form than in substance. Yet, over the years, it has

sucked away over Rs. 583 crores (upto 1969-70) excluding the people's voluntary contribution in labour, estimated at Rs. 175 crores. Realising the futility of it all, the people's contribution declined from 54 per cent to 9.5 per cent of the government expenditure on the CD Programme.²

Specifically, in the matter of 'bringing more modern technology to the village craftsman and helping him to create a link with the national market', the Khadi and Village Industries Commission has been operating nationwide programmes more or less independently of the Community Development Programme.

As Dandekar and Rath have shown in *Poverty in India*, much of the efforts of the Commission have ended in disillusionment and disappointment: 'We have examined at such length the khadi programme of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission because to illustrate well all the problems of protecting an inferior technology in the presence of an advanced technology and of artificially restraining the pace of introduction of improved technology. All these propositions are old and if, in spite of much disillusionment and disappointment, they still persist, it is because some people, well-meant though they are, simply would not see the logic of economic development.'

Unfortunately, however, Dande-kar and Rath appear to have come to this conclusion based mainly on the failure of the New Model Charkha on which the Khadi Commission spent a lot of money and energy. It may be conceded that the Commission committed a costly error. But the authors seem to have drawn a hasty conclusion that 'the village industries require less capital per person employed but not necessarily less capital per unit of output'. Besides khadi, there are a large variety of rural industries. One would, therefore, have

² India 1971-72

Nilakantha Rath, Indian School of Political Economy, Economic and Political Weekly 1971.

liked to see some more empirical evidence for such a general inference. It is my own impression that in many of the villages, industries and crafts mainly require working capital. Fixed investment required for tools and equipment is marginal. With an increased supply of working capital, they can improve their output and sales several times.

The point to be noted is that the sale of many of the village industries and crafts is seasonal in nature. In view of the artisans' limited working capital resources, they are able to offer only a small stock of goods for sale or satisfy only a part of the demand. With additional working capital they could buy a larger volume of goods for sale. This would have the immediate and definite consequence of increasing their period of employment as well as individual income. And should the skilled workers find themselves so beneficially engaged, they are bound to draw in the raw young hands as apprentices.

Another glaring deficiency relates to marketing. In the absence of a marketing infrastructure, the products of village industries are unable to catch the attention of markets beyond their own. Besides, expansion beyond one's local market is a source of pressure for improvement which a good, and an effective marketing organisation not only transmits but also helps to translate.

mounting disillusionment The with the Community Development Programme and Khadi and Village Industries development programme was sought to be remedied by launching new programmes such as the Intensive Agricultural Development Programme' and the 'Intensive Rural Industries Projects' in the second and the third five-year plans. Though these programmes devoted greater attention to their respective areas of specialisations, namely, agriculture and rural industries, their success too has been limited as they were carried out in isolation with each other and also unrelated to other on-going activities in their area of Furthermore. since operation.

these 'sectoral and temporal programmes have seldom had a strong methodological foundation aimed to promote growth and integrated development, it was but natural that their impact would be uneven'4.

More importantly, no enduring results have been achieved as development has not been oriented towards harnessing the regional resources. As has been pointed out by Dr. K. N. Raj and others, the basic weakness of planning so far has been 'that no serious effort has been made to visualise and translate into concrete form a pattern of development that can fully utilise and be therefore supported by the resource endowments of the region. Consequently, many of the projects and schemes proposed and implemented as part of the fiveyear plans have not had the potential for initiating a process of deve-lopment that could strike root in the region and gather momentum over a period of time. Even those which had such potential have not been adequately supported by the kind of related investments necessary to bring it out.'

Dr. Raj and his colleagues have, therefore, rightly stressed that an important task to be undertaken is, 'the formulation of a perspective about the pattern of development most appropriate to the resource endowments of the region'.

Under the pressure of Garibi hatao, many ideas are being put forward to eradicate unemployment. The most persuasive of these is: 'to offer and assure employment to all those who are willing to work on a minimum wage on works which can be immediately undertaken, namely, projects of land development, irrigation, afforestation, road construction etc. This can immediately place in the hands of the poor incomes which may give them the desirable minimum living and in the process create community assets in improved land and water resources and needed infrastructure which in due course will improve the productivity in the economy and accelerate the process of economic development. A large programme of rural works organised as a permanent feature for some years to come will also enable some of the agricultural proletariat to withdraw permanently from agriculture and thus help rationalise the existing employment in agriculture."

While no one would like to put obstacles in the way of the speedy removal of poverty, it has to be pointed out that this overwhelming emphasis on development of land resources again reduces the entire programme of development in the rural areas to a construction programme. Rural industries are not even mentioned in it—perhaps for the reason that economists like Dandekar and others have finally concluded that not only khadi and charkha but all village industries use more capital per unit of output.

Two other weaknesses of the Rural Works Programme need to be recognised. First, 'it is also possible—as is generally the case—for public works programmes to deteriorate into a disguised system of doles resulting in large scale wastage of resources. Moreover, there can be serious difficulties in building up and maintaining public works activity on a scale that would provide adequate employment on a more or less continuous basis for large numbers of people.'6 Besides, a great deal of engineering skill is required for the proper planning, designing and execution of land and water development works if they are not to meet the same fate as the road building and other activities carried out under the CD Programme as noted earlier, The experience of the Rural Works Programme carried out during the last six to seven years shows that the requisite engineering support has not been provided.

Secondly, the Rural Works Programme which essentially im-

^{4 &#}x27;Project Design—Pilot Research Project in Growth Centres' The Ministry of Community Development and the Ford Foundation, May, 1971.

^{5. &#}x27;Poverty in India' by V. M. Dandekar and Nilakantha Rath.

Some Perspectives on Planning and Development with Particular Reference to Kerala—Raj, Panikar & Krishnan.

plies manual labour is not going to be able to arrest the drift of the potential village leaders to urban areas, especially since with the spread of education, they have become more averse to manual work. Therefore, as has been suggested by Dr. K. N. Raj and others,7 'for the most efficient utilization of the relatively educated and skilled labour, it is necessary to develop a network of fairly skill-intensive industries based either on the natural resources of the region or on the basis of intermediate goods which can be expected to be available to the State at sufficiently low prices for these industries to be able to compete with similar industries elsewhere. There are many such industries that are not very capital-intensive and which can be organised in the form of small and medium-scale enterprises.'

The programme of rural works being envisaged for the fifth plan, therefore, needs to be broadened to include support to existing rural industries which do not require a high dose of capital and promise a wage comparable to that expected to be provdied by the Rural Works Programme. Additionally, a conscious effort is required to develop a network of moderate skill-intensive industries, whether based on need or local resources.

But, thought must also be given to not only the programmes but the manner of their integration and spatial location. The location of the network of industries within the block should be carefully chosen to develop a nucleus which in course of time would be able to support the development of other industries in the surrounding areas. Initially, the industrial programmes need to concentrate on provision of working capital and improvement in marketing facilities, first within the block and subsequently in the adjoining blocks and beyond. Marketing would thus be a process of exchange of goods from one area to another.

Subsequently, a survey and technical planning unit should identify

industries which can be set up in the area, prepare feasibility reports and make them available to local entre-Association of preneurs. The Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD), for instance, has found during the preparation of the Musahri Plan that there were over a hundred persons in that block who were interested in setting up industries and willing to mobilize a considerable part of the required financial resources. This phenomenon is typical of the countryside today. What is needed is organisational initiative and support from the central and State governments.

he exercises in development model building at the block level being conducted for the last two years by the Growth Centres Project are of vital significance. The objective of the Growth Centre Project is to provide a quantitative base for decisions at the block level on investment and location as also the effect on settlement pattern of the investment input. The information gathered is basically spatial and socio-economic. Its analysis is based on the concept of the catchment area, i.e., the area that will be served by the Growth Centre. The basic requirement is that the Growth Centre must radiate development.

In the 20 blocks covered under this project, spatial analysis has * provided a series of sites for locating different facilities such as schools, hospitals, dispensaries, banks, godowns, market centres and other necessary facilities. It is recognised that, given the heterogeneous nature of the country, there can be no blind application of the results, but it is clear that for the first time on the rural scene, something methodological and thoughtful is being planned which takes into account all aspects of life on the one hand and regional resources on the other. This kind of a development model is the essential starting point. It is necessary to extend this service to thousands of blocks; and it is through this mechanism that the various programmes for rural works, industries, etc., should be coordinated at the base.

Transportation and housing

ROBEY LAL

THINK of India thirty years from today. An India with a hundred crore population—with two mouths to feed for every one of us here today. What will life be like in the year 2002? How are we to clothe, house, educate and work? What shall we do for jobs, recreation leisure and travel? Are there changes in our society that we can foresee or changes that we want?

In any discussions to take place on how to plan for the future, there being no simple solutions, two factors have to be given high priority. These are mass transportation and housing. On the face of it the problems are progressively getting worse in these areas. Consider some of the facts of today and the projections for tomorrow.

There are about 55 crores of us today. Of these 11 crores live in our towns and cities and the rest in Conservative forecasts show that in 30 years there will be a 100 crore Indians. Of these nearly 40 crores will want to live in cities and 60 crores in the villages. Evento a casual observer, it is obvious that the major brunt of growth in the next thirty years will be borne in accommodating those who will want to live in cities. The records, however, show that the existing towns and cities have been incapable of handling even the growth of the past twenty years. In 1951, the shortage of housing in our cities was about 28 lakhs of units; in 1956 it was 50 lakhs, by 1966, 119 lakhs and by 1974, the end of the fourth five-year plan, the shortage is expected to be nearly 140 lakh units. Obviously, our policies, our technology and our effort have been completely inadequate.

Besides the shortage of housing, living and working conditions of our people are very poor. Clean water supply is intermittent, the roads, the railways, the buses are all becoming increasingly crowded,

sanitary and sewage services reach a miniscule proportion of the total city population, power supply to both home and industry is erratic. In short, the whole process of urbanisation is beginning to choke itself.

There is much talk of planning our cities but very little action. Chandigarh, so often heralded as a masterpiece of town planning, has not stirred any comparable efforts even in the neighbouring towns of Haryana and Punjab. The economic development of towns bordering Chandigarh has only resulted in garish copies of architectural style. Closer to Chandigarh, which boasts an attractive administrative centre, rings of industrial slums are beginning to develop.

In large cities like Delhi and Bombay, the only term that can describe their development is urban cancer. Miles upon miles of visualblighted, extravagantly and wastefully built housing colonies, inadequately serviced, are all palmed off as growth. Growth it is but at the cost of the majority, the people who cannot afford to build concrete and steel and glass man-Too much weightage is sions. being given to commercial pressures for the development of commercial blocks and hotels and very little to human needs.

To change the planning scene, there is dire need to examine and redefine some basic concepts and goals. The very first concept which needs clarification is that of 'an urban area'.

In the past, the term 'urban area' referred to the town within the walled city; the term being derived from 'urbs', the Latin word for walls. The implication was that city walls were built after taking into account the topography of the region and the political and military relationship between the city and its neighbours. Within its walls

the city was self supporting, especially during the period of a siege. In many towns, apart from the walls, natural barriers such as rivers, mountain ranges, cliffs and the like, also provided natural boundaries and thereby contained its spread.

With industrialisation and modern warfare, the concept of a boundary, so essential in planning, has been eroded. We see the results in the spread of the urban cancer, the endless expansion of overburdened towns. It is most necessary therefore to re-establish the concept of an urban development as an area with a boundary, the determinants of the boundary being the technology available to maintain a human scale.

The human scale in turn is reflected in criteria such as the travel time to work and commercial areas should not exceed 20 minutes, the monthly expense of commuting to work and back should not exceed 5 per cent of the monthly income. facilities provided for housing must be related to the needs and means of the occupants, minimum water power and sanitary services must be guaranteed. The norms given above are indicative of the nature of the many factors whose definition by social scientists and planners will contribute to the concept of 'boundaries in planning'.

The second concept which must be understood is the rural-urban relationship. The population wanting to live in the towns and cities is the one that requires the concentrated planning effort. What attracts people to cities? The reasons are many but these are the main ones.

In some areas people are becoming redundant on the farms due to growing mechanisation.

Diametrically opposed to the above, is low rural productivity which drives people from the villages to other areas.

Small scale industries are not developed.

Education and skills are poor. Wealth and property are highly concentrated.

Movement of dependents.

The people who move to cities are generally not trained for the

jobs there or accustomed to an urban pattern of living. Hence the growth of slums in towns, holding an untrained, uneconomic population.

Other factors contributing to the growth of slums are apathy on the part of landlords to maintain buildings due to excessive real estate speculation, as in Bombay, and the municipal authority's inability to make effective use of land or maintain effective control due to 'political pressures'.

The third concept, which is ignored at the moment, is the mobility of people changing their pattern of living. Inability occurs in three different streams—social, economic and physical. In considering these, one runs into the problems of values in a changing society.

There are parallels in the form of urban areas and the societies which built them. The walled city of the past provided for communities where the social hierarchy, the economic prospects and physical location within the city were distinctly stratified. Where a city was designed to be self-sufficient and expansion beyond the boundaries was risking trouble in the event of attacks, it was necessary to develop a social order wherein all the services were provided by a limited number of people. The need for security compelled people of different professions to live together in a restricted area.

Today, with industrial development and the rural-urban movement gaining momentum, the values, which govern community living are changing.

The promise of economic advancement attracts people to industrial areas. In the majority of cases, this requires physical mobility and with it the need to adapt to a new set of social values. To overcome the last factor, immigrants from the same community tend to live together—even if it means accepting the many problems of overcrowding and long distance

commuting. Our cities then tend to be only a collection of relocated villages. Since present development plans show very little relationships between the location of the new arrivals, housing and work areas, a very poorly served community has developed. These people live on the fringes of towns, make their living off the urban areas, commute long distances, pay higher prices but do not benefit from the better education, entertainment and health services available.

It is with the above concepts in mind that one can venture to outline the directions for future planning.

The first goal of planning should be the balanced urban development of industry, housing, education and health services in smaller towns, away from the existing large metropolis. This should be done in conjunction with studies to determine the limits of urban growth for optimum development.

A point for serious consideration is that India is suffering from under-urbanisation. There is too much emphasis being placed on greater industrialisation and not enough on the development of the transportation infra-structure and housing, such as to permit a balance being struck between economic growth and social development.

A necessary change in our value system is the acceptance of mobility—and the transitory state—that is developing in our country. All planning, economic and physical, must be geared to that fact. The value of permanent possession of material items must be minimised and in its place a system of temporary usage and rental must be encouraged to make the optimum use of our country's limited resources. This must be aimed at the mass and not cater to the convenience of the individual,

The allocation of our resources must be undertaken not on the basis of a minimum capital expenditure for all projects, which is unfortunately what many of the guardians of our finances tend to see as their duty, but for projects meant to obtain the maximum human benefits. To obtain these benefits it is not valid to limit physical planning to arbitrarily defined regions, where urban pockets are seen to exist in a vast rural sea. It is imperative to consider India as a network of transportation arteries and the cities and villages as nodes in the network.

Transportation systems are the life lines of a modern nation. People have to be transported between homes and jobs and offices and recreational areas and schools and shops and hospitals.

Electricity has to be transported from generating stations to homes, to streets, to industries, to the field; it has to be sent to the villages and to the cities.

Food has to be taken from the fields and dairies to the shops and then to the people.

Water must be collected in lakes and reservoirs or taken from the rivers to fields for agriculture, to the homes of people, to industries. When it has served its usefulness it has to be treated and disposed of.

Raw materials must be mined, processed in one factory, then sent to a second to make them into usable goods and then the goods must be distributed throughout the country to serve the people. Bricks, stones, cement, steel, medicine, books, messages, yes messages, by mail or radio or telephone (call it communication if you like) have to be carried and distributed throughout the country to keep the counry running. When all this has to be provided to serve 55 or 100 crores of people the only term that is applicable is mass transportation.

There is an hierarchy in the scales of mass transportation—urban, regional and national. One does not have to examine the present systems in detail to realise that they are grossly inadequate.

Consider urban transportation. In the large cities, travel time between home and work for the majority of the people is an hour each way. Bombay, which boasts of an efficient transportation system

is efficient only by quantitative judgement. The suburban trains run crowded in the peak hours and there is no consideration for passenger convenience or comfort. And yet without it Bombay would not exist. Delhi, wryly called the city of miles, is a nightmare. The wait for buses is interminable, as are the distances for those who have to bicycle endless miles to work.

In Allahabad and Kanpur and Nagpur and other cities which lie next in the order of magnitude. public transportation does not exist for all practical purposes. The only way to travel is by bicycle or the horrendous auto-rickshaws. And yet where are the buses for the people being built. The project for small cars had been collecting cobwebs for ages, and now it threatens to become a reality. Each private car makes a demand on the scarce national resources of metals, oils and space. Yet its utilisation is very poor. It is used for barely 10 per cent of the time and that too not at full capacity. Instead of this, if either buses or efficient taxi systems are developed the utilization of the same materials will increase manifold. This is a prime example of optimisation by rental.

Our goal has to be redefined. It should be the provision of a seat to travel on, conveniently and comfortably, for all who desire it, not the providing of private cars to a few.

The present policies of concentrating industrial growth near large cities or developing new towns have to be curbed. In the first case, the concentration of wealth acts as a magnet to attract a greater number of immigrants. In the second case, the cost of developing a completely new infra-structure is very high.

An intermediate relationship, by which industrial centres are developed in areas from where the greatest rural-urban migration takes place, would be useful. Today's agriculturally rich areas require an infra-structure similar in nature to that required by the industrial areas. Good road and rail transportation, power and water supply, etc., are required for both the

sectors. By locating the two sectors, rural and urban, in close proximity there could be an appreciable reduction in infra-structure costs. Also, the people who are released from working in the fields can develop new skills and apply them in the vicinity of their homes, without burdening the cities.

The policy of developing new towns in desolately rural areas can be disastrous. The rise of Durgapur is a prime example of industrial growth without any consideration of local conditions or regional needs.

The forests which covered the rolling hills were bulldozed out of existence. Wherever possible earthmovers levelled the land. Then, houses of the standard row type, approved by 'the powers' were laid along the barren land. Today the paltry efforts at landscaping have resulted in stunted trees, surrounded by brick and tin protectors; amidst bleak rows of houses, all obscured by the dust blowing up and down the roads. Nor is there relief if you look beyond the townships since the pall of smoke from the steel plant pollutes the region.

In other rural areas, new industrial townships disrupt the agrarian pattern of life by attracting the young, able bodied men to work in the factory while a handful are left behind to support the aged in the villages. The balance of the rural-urban relationship is violated thoughtlessly, because provisions are not made to balance the loss of manpower on the farms by mechanical means.

Obviously, a major objective in planning would be to develop schemes where transportation would be kept to a minimum. What should be transported are the services, which cause the least disruption to accepted modes of life and hence permit an evolution of Within urban social patterns. areas mass transportation is most effective when used in conjunction with mass or high density housing. The reason that life in Bombay can continue in the manner it does is that mass transportation for people is in close proximity to high density housing. In cities like Delhi

where sprawling colonies have been developed, it is very expensive to provide bus routes within a conveniently accessible range of a large number of people as in Bombay. Again, there is an optimum balance between the cost of all the services provided and the economic and human benefits which accrue.

Emphasis on the development of the regional centres and towns would permit priority allocation of resources to be decided upon for national and regional development. The concept of using different levels of technology for different priorities has to be emphasised. As an example, let me compare regional housing construction and road development.

In many rural areas of our country, there exist communities developed to serve local customs, built with locally available material and designed to cope with the climatic demands of the region. These villages have never seen an architect or a planner from the formal profession, yet there has developed a community which fits into the regional context. It is most necessary for modern developers to learn these local techniques of construction and design and apply them to developing new housing patterns and above all, understanding the

In Rajasthan, housing projects undertaken by the State Housing Board are making just such an effort. Only locally available stone and lime are used throughout the construction. The use of cement is limited to making the floor and the minimum of steel is being used in doors and windows. The result has been extremely low cost construction, employment for local labour with locally available skills and the minimum use of 'expensive material' like cement and steel; which can now be diverted to other projects, e.g., construction of roads and bridges, where they are indispensable. Similar use of local material is also being made in Kanpur and Kerala. But unfortunately these innovative efforts are few and far between.

It is time that the towns and villages being developed in the

U.P. and Punjab used clay and a cement mix for construction. Being of local material, easily available and cheaper to use, the process of breaking down and rebuilding structures at a later date will be an economic proposition as compared to destroying monoliths of concrete and bricks and steel. This also serves the concept of flexible solutions to transient demands. In Jorhat, Assam, extensive research in developing new building material from bamboo, rice husks bagasse and other waste materials is under way. These now have to be introduced in practice.

The sophistication of the technological expertise to be employed should vary according to the location where it is to be used. Only in metropolitan cities should industrially intensive construction techniques be permitted—this would reduce the demand for housingby keeping our unwanted population and speeding up construction. In the smaller towns, closer to the rural areas, labour intensive techniques should be used to act as a source of employment to labourers who would otherwise want to migrate to cities.

The policy of using industrially intensive techniques is a logical extension of the concept of social control of urban land that is being expounded so freely at present. Essentially, this entails acquiring large parcels of land and then leasing it out to development agencies. The development agency then constructs the houses.

The essential feature of this programme would be that construction could only be undertaken by firms that were qualified and certified by the municipal authorities. qualifications would include getting a system of construction passed which guarantees a minimum number of dwelling units in a given time period for a specified maximum cost. Only the development agencies certified by the municipal authorities would be permitted to construct dwellings in the city. A necessary proviso in this case is also the curtailment of the construction of single and dual unit houses that only the rich can afford. When we are planning for

the masses, independent houses, even on 400 or 500 sq. m. plots, are a complete anachronism. The competitions to acquire designs for housing the middle and low income groups in Delhi is admirable in that it is the first step to the possibility of providing mass housing.

Loday, there is no designing for human beings and there is only talk of lowering the cost of construction. Our designers look to commissions from the rich who can afford to spend lavishly on the most hideous permutations and combinations of concrete and glass and marble. But they do not design for people who need alternative designs to meet the very basic demands in life. Much research and study is still to be done, to compare the sort of facilities and the accompanying costs that different family sizes and varying paying capacities must be provided with, e.g., the needs of a family of five and a monthly earning of Rs. 150 will be very different from the needs of a single man earning the same amount. Only after having identified a range of human needs and the accompanying paying capability can any worthwhile technical studies be undertaken.

The attempt to 'humanize' the slums by providing water supply, a few power points and meagre sanitation are the efforts of well-meaning people who have no concept of the magnitude or the wide range of problems that a slum signifies. With attempts like these, slums will become the way of life in India in another 30 years.

It is necessary to make a concerted effort to meet the challenges of growth in absolute terms and also improve the living conditions of the people. The measures that have been outlined will be ineffectual if tried individually. Banning private cars is neither desired nor à solution to urban transportation, moving industries to rural areas indiscriminately give rise to a myriad of problems already discussed, providing quicker and cheaper housing in the cities invite more problems than they solve. But, as a whole they form the core around which it is possible to develop a plan of action for the future.

The great reversal

SURINDAR SURI

THE Prime Minister, in a speech delivered recently to the Educational Conference held Wardha, proclaimed a basic principle of the mass line. She declared that education need not be confined to schools, colleges and other certified institutions. Education is to be received in every factory, farm, or other production units. This goes to the heart of the matter because the monopoly of education and training by institutions certified and controlled by the vested class is a key factor in the maintenance of an elitist system inimical to the interests of the masses. But, there is a world of difference between proclaiming some ideas of the mass line and actually implementing them. No member of the present ruling group appears willing to risk her or his future on putting the mass line into effect. Merely to issue progressive declarations but failing to implement them is one of the methods by which the masses are repressed.

Several issues emerge from consideration of the mass line in education. Its elaboration and its implementation are distinct but interrelated activities. The manner in which a programme is elaborated does in fact determine whether it will be implemented and the manner in which it may be put into effect. If those who produce a plan are not the ones whose interests will be served by implementing it, then the plan, however beneficial or elegant, is not going to be imple-

mented and there is little sense in blaming only the bureaucrats whose duty it is to ensure implementation. To consider a slightly different case: a plan aimed at uplifting the masses will be nevertheless carried out in such a manner that the interests of the implementing bureaucracy and businessmen are mainly served. Suppose that we develop a plan of a mass line in education. If those who prepare the plan are not themselves part of the masses, if they are themselves not gharib, what motivation do they have to see that the plan is put into practice. And the masses are likely to discover that the plan or the programme furthers the interests of the planners and of the implementing bureaucracy rather than of the masses. Their enthusiasm is unlikely to catch fire.

The masses do not have access to techniques of planning or to resources and skills for implementation. Economists, scientists, educators, etc., have to be utilised toward these ends. Administrative and engineering skills are needed at all levels. But the overall direction, control and enforcement must be in the hands of the mass-oriented political leadership. Something more is needed. It is the active involvement of the masses in setting the goals of development, determining the overall framework. developing concrete programmes. If those who work out the plan are the very people whose interests will be furthered by it, the lacuna in

implementation will not arise. Planning and implementation will become one inter-connected and ongoing process rather than two different processes entrusted to two separate groups with divergent outlooks and interests. The bedrock of unity can be provided only by the masses.

Recent developments in eduinstitutions, cational especially widespread student unrest in many parts of our country, suggest that the educational system may be the weak link in the chain of exploitation of the masses. If we do not indulge in idle talk about the mass line but intend to initiate measures that actually implement it, we have to undertake practical steps to channel unrest and dissatisfaction into constructive activity. An obvious first step is to analyse the crucial part played by the present system of education in servicing the exploitive economic and political machinery which holds the masses in its grip. In other words, an initial task is to educate the people, particularly students and teachers, about the present educational system. When the true function of the educational system becomes clear as day, a process of disen-chantment will ensue. The system of education may then be put into reverse gear so that the minds and energies of students and teachers are directed, not to staffing the exploitive and repressive institutions but to articulating the creative energy, values and needs of the masses.

Education is never divorced from economic and political power. To serve power is easy but it is difficult to oppose it. In India the vested interests-political and economic but also bureaucratic are themselves to a large extent products of the educational system, which forms the chasm that divides the goats from the sheep. Thus, the present politico-economic structure will not survive the collapse of the educational system, especially at the college and university level. The tie-in explains the vast expansion of higher education in India in contrast to the stagnation of primary education, for the exploiting classes must be dynamic if they are to

maintain their position in a society in transition.

When the economy is developing, as in India, the ruling class must continually deepen and stretch its hold. Towards this end the necessary manpower must be recruited, appropriate ideas and beliefs developed and propagated. The growth of the economy is limited by the managerial and leadership capacities of the ruling class. In other words, the economy cannot be allowed to grow so fast that the ruling class finds itself unable to maintain control. The growth of the class in numbers and in skill determines the expansion of the economy. Higher education in India serves it both ways by adding to its numbers and skills.

Higher education in expands in such a way that it produces educated unemployed, that is to say it creates a scarcity of jobs. Its expansion is parallel to the growth of the economy which is marked by a scarcity of goods and services. C. T. Kurien has argued in his recent writings that the control of the economy by a particular class is demonstrated in its ability to create scarcity. The psychologi-cal and social mechanisms by which scarcity is created so as to manipulate and control the people so affected, are well known. Basically, the mechanism is that of inflaming needs, desires, wants. It may be done by advertising and propaganda (on 'education') distributing samples or providing controlled experi-Inflation is the subtle accomplice of control by scarcity.

But, in India the educational system more than anything else is effective in inflating demand for jobs, salaries, goods and services. Within this overall situation, well-intentioned political leaders who battle heroically to sustain the hopes of the masses achieve little more than to provide a link in the chain of exploitation. If people lose hope and reduce their expectations, it will become difficult to manipulate them. The long chain of exploitation contains many links including need. demand, hope, expectation, scarcity, partial appeasement, conformity, dependence and manipulation which lead to domination,

exploitation and control. Education forges and strengthens the links in the middle.

Who determines the goals of education in India, who sets its norms and articulates its values? It is clear that whoever sets the norms will mould the entire field of education toward specific ends. There is no question but that our education is guided by values that are irrelevant to the needs and aspirations of the masses. In fact, the educational system is oriented to the norms of the western countries, particularly Britain and the U.S.A. Its main sources of knowledge are located in the West. It fosters the colonial mind whose centre of gravity drifts outside India's boundaries. Thus, effectuation of the mass line presents a double task, for education has to be decolonised as well as de-elited. The problem therefore is political. It has not been touched at all in the proposed five-year plan for education of the Ministry of Education for the fifth plan period.

If the educational system is servile towards the West, it is imperialist in its relationship to the masses. It imparts information and inculcates attitudes which detach students, teachers, administrators from the social and even the economic reality around them. The spectacle is pathetic, for the more educated an individual becomes, the more helpless he is in relation to his native environment. The better educated he is, the more he needs to be carried in the lap of an employer whether the government or some business agency. As a child needs a milk bottle to suckle, so the educated person needs a ready-made job, which must be well-guarded by rules and regulations as well as by rituals against scrutiny about its usefulness to the people.

Employment geared to this system of education does not produce good for the masses but creates a new 'caste'. It is necessary to uncover the true nature of the education system so that the large numbers of young persons who are lured into joining it are freed from the spell and enabled to turn the

other way so as to fashion an educational process for the self-liberation of the masses.

One has to begin at the begining, for even literacy is not neutral. The alphabet is learned not separately but tied to ideas. norms, attitudes and goals. Learning at the very elementary level is influenced by the environment in which it takes place—where, in whose company, by which teacher, with what words and phrases. No less important are the unspoken assumptions about the nature of knowledge, of language, grammar, etc. On this point there is little difference between Gandhian nai talim and the western-oriented education. The average child or man perceives immediately on entering the first grade of school that the world of education and learning is not the world in which he lives. He must learn to think new thoughts that are unlike his ordinary thoughts, he must change his pronunciation, facial expression. his gait, his clothing. He must adopt new attitudes, learn new patterns of logic.

If an ordinary person is to become educated, he must leave his old way of life and acquire a new way. There might be something to be said for this transformation if it encompassed everyone and if it were fully consummated. But the transformation that the educational system seeks to bring about touches only a minority of the population, thus causing cleavage in the society. But, the process of education, which is basically a process of westernization, is rarely carried through to the limit. In most cases it remains half-baked and produces an inner cleavage in the individual's psyche. The social and the psychic cleavages merge to produce the peculiar social-psychology of India today.

Thus, there forms an image of the two worlds. There is the world of education, wealth and power on one side and, on the other, the world of the common man—ignorant, uncouth, poor and helpless. The distinction is conveyed to the child in any pathshala or school; it is reinforced with every lesson. Neither the child nor his com-

munity has much of a choice in the matter. Except by remaining illiterate, he must accept that the world of learning and affluence is the better one and, having only a 10% chance of succeeding in it, he is doomed to live in darkness.

Those who succeed more or less, look downwards at the benighted masses. Contempt for the uneducated or the less-educated is an essential part of the social dynamic of education, and it makes the educated individual an instrument in the complex mechanism of exploitation and oppression of the masses. It happens because knowledge is not power and it is certainly not food. The drive for power is very different from the dedication to knowledge, even if the psychology of political leadership rests on an inner motivation similar to that of the educated person. Where the scholar seeks to overcome his inner conflicts by the acquisition of knowledge, which means increasing facility in handling abstractions, the seeker for political power develops a need for domination and manipulation of other beings. In any contest between the two, the political individual has a decided edge, but a symbiotic relationship is established easily between the two. We must understand it if we are to emancipate the scholars from thralldom to the power holders and enable them to work for the mass line.

▲n a typical relationship between the scholar and the ruler, the latter displaces the ideal of the omniscient being which a scholar carries in the back of his mind. The politician or his agent says to the scholar in effect: stop worrying about the imperfection of your knowledge. The time you waste in pursuing it will make you useless for me. Your present state of knowledge is good enough if you make it policy-oriented. Not a few scholars are relieved by the authorities are relieved by the authorities are relieved by the scholars are relieved by the ritative dispensation that frees them from the never-ending task of perfecting their knowledge. But, sooner or later, they discover that the political ruler does not have much use for their knowledge or wisdom (occasionally the ruler also takes some time to discover this)

A rare scholar rebels after finding but he does need their ability to embroider his goals and purposes. this out but the vast majority succeeds in appeasing its conscience in one way or another. The stereotype of the Jesuit or the archetypal Brahmin, who can be persuaded to find convincing arguments on any side of an issue, applies to intellectuals generally.

No less of an obstacle in effectuating the mass line in education is the relationship between the scholar and the businessman. Where the scholar manipulates abstractions and the political ruler manipulates individuals and groups, the businessman manipulates goods and services. The businessman's personality intermingles with concrete objects. In this he is the opposite of the intellectual, who denies himself the satisfaction of his inner drive through the accumulation of material objects or Therefore, there is no wealth. natural point of contact between the scholar and the businessman, for the manipulation of the scholar by means of economic incentives is far more demeaning than is his collusion with the politician. This is because the manipulation of other human beings, which can take place occasionally on the moral plane, involves a mind-to-mind relationship.

Political power in a class society must be clothed in illusions and illustrated by allegories; it must appear polished and colourful for ceremonies and rituals. Education is oriented to these goals: it beautifies power. The businessman cannot compete with the ruler in winning public acclaim, but big business houses are beginning to promote conspicuous waste by opening up research centres and financing vast advertising campaigns that sustain artists and copy writers.

We have referred at some length to the present tie-up between education and the needs of the political power structure as well as the growing business interests. Despite its waste and apparent irrelevance, the Indian educational system is not without its usefulness for the pre-

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vailing politico-economic system. Its apparent irrationality hides the deeper integration between the dominant classes in the different spheres of activity, such as business, politics, education. The point of unity between them is the exploitation and oppression of the masses. Because the educational system is apparently irrational, it becomes difficult to unravel its links with other spheres of activity and to identify its core functions. Education trains the elite to staff the expanding sphere of economic exploitation of the masses; it fosters attitudes that sustain rather than thwart the politico-economic system. The educational system draws away the potential leaders of the masses, renders them helpless and incapable of being effective in any way except by serving the dominant class.

Educated unemployment in this perspective is not an unexpected or unwelcome phenomenon, for it serves a dual purpose for the dominant class. It reveals the helplessness of the educated individuals to look after themselves except with the assistance of the rich and the powerful. The sense of material insecurity arouses everyone's acquisitiveness and greed. Those who have jobs strive ruthlessly to further their material self-interest and security, thus splitting the jobseeking middle class internally and setting it against the poor.

It is said sometimes that education does not inculcate the values of individual independence or initiative. But unfortunately it does. Our present education helps to make the student independent of his community. As no individual can live by himself alone, it also makes him dependent on those who can provide him with a job and further his career. The student has no sense of obligation or respect for his community, especially if it is poor or rural. He does not rely on his community to provide him livelihood or the satisfaction of his social needs. Thus, the educated individual has no compelling reason to work for the betterment of his community. In short, the educational system generates an internal brain drain of vastly greater dimension, and infinitely more harmful to the country than the brain drain from India to the West. In fact, the two drains are serviced by a single pipeline and the external brain drain cannot be curbed until we plug the domestic portion.

Where Gandhian education has failed as badly as the official, variety is that, in addition to building around a priori values (whether Gandhian or modern) it inculcates an attitude of charity or benevolence towards the masses. But doing good to the poor is degrading. According to the mass line, the correct attitude for an educated person who comes from a poor community is to expect it to meet his material and social needs. This expectation should be on the basis of mutuality, thus developing a living relationship between the educated person and the community. If he establishes this relationship, the student will not feel crippled and helpless, as students feel.

The exception is in cases where they come from flourishing business families, who will be absorbed readily into ongoing business or new offices will be set up for them. Others who belong to influential civil service families or political dynasties will also be provided for in the bureaucracy or the business world. A few students of poor families who happen to be brilliant will succeed in one sphere or another. But almost all students need to be taken care of, and the manufacture and supply of jobs, or job creation, has been institutionalised by experts. The job itself has become distinct from work; it is not connected with the needs of the community. The employee fills the job and has no sense of serving people. His only gation is to those who give him the job and help him to better his prospects. This creates within him a sense of solidarity with the bureaucracy or the business world, which develop their own selfinterest distinct from the interests of the masses. Since education plays a key role in this process, it is amply rewarded. Higher education is well-financed. University campuses are palatial. Professors are well-paid. Experts are honoured by inclusion in high-powered commissions. The alienation from the masses is complete.

From the foregoing it is clear that the present system of education is an integral part of the mechanism of economic exploitation and political repression of the masses. It is doubly effective be-cause it nurtures the class of exploiters but also inflicts a feeling of inferiority on the masses and those who do not make it to the top of the educational ladder. The mass line will reverse this structure, where education will not separate the scholar from the masses but bring the two closer together. The world of learning will not be cut off from the world of the masses, for students and teachers will learn from the masses, assist them to unfold their talents and capacities, thus ending their exploitation. To this end it is essential that the masses should control the educational process, but something more is required.

In many western countries, control over education, especially at the school level, vests with the common people. For instance, in the U.S.A. school boards are elected by universal franchise and function independently of other political bodies. But these have not succeeded in ending the repression and exploitation of the masses. There are several reasons for this. In a capitalist society, the pursuit of wealth is the main individual and social motivation. Greed for wealth provides a fertile soil for exploitation. At the same time, the philosophy of education remains elitist, despite streaks of populism as in the educational thought of John Dewey. Therefore, in content, if not always in style, learning and knowledge are counterposed to the life and ideas of the common people. Even the folk school movement in Scandinavian countries has not overcome the basic elitism. A democratic structure of control, even the populist impulse, has not prevailed against pervasive capitalism and the elitist concepts of knowledge.

This is not to maintain that popular control over education is

inessential. It is necessary. But it is clear that the socio-economic framework of the educational process is a more powerful force. At the same time, however, the philosophy and methodology of education, including beliefs about the nature of knowledge, are important Thus we have isolated factors. three factors that are essential to the mass line in education. These are control by the masses, an appropriate political and socio-economic setting, and mass-oriented philosophy and methodology of education. These have a direct relevance to the current situation in

In the first place, education is integrated into the socio-economic and political developments. The basic decisions are made by those who control wealth and power in the society. Contrariwise, any educational movement that runs counter to the dominant economic and political structure faces serious obstacles; it needs very careful planning and practice to overcome or bypass them. Here we mention only the general factors: the basic socio-economic philosophy of the mass line cannot be based on arousing or appeasing greed and its psychological twins--insecurity and fear. The goals of the mass line must be social, not material. While the basic needs of all must be satisfied, the main goals must be social solidarity equality, security. Satisfaction of basic needs and the feeling of social solidarity based on equality generate a tremendous outpouring of creative energy. It can withstand almost any challenge, as witness Vietnam, and it can move mountains, e.g., transform an ancient civilisation. The mass line brings home to us that education cannot be separated from social, economic and political action. Education in this mode fosters the unity of learning and action, guiding it intelligently away from rashness.

More concretely, the mass line will be put into action by shifting the present educational system into reverse gear at least for some teachers, students and administrators. They will repudiate the goals of the present system, not indulging in

destructive violence against its outer forms, such as buildings, or the examination system, or other specific irritants, but turning around the fundamental thrust. What is practical is not to start a new educational system, or new institutions, but to generate counter currents in the existing structures.

One final consideration remains to be discussed. Experience of the struggles for liberation of the masses in different parts of the world contains a clear lesson. Focussing the struggle on economic goals has proved self-defeating. No degree of affluence has proved enough for the people to transcend it and adopt social or moral goals. The transcendence can be more effective when the society is poor and greed for consumption has not become widespread. In other words, mass poverty provides a favourable condition for the effectuation of the mass line. It provides the right atmosphere to develop values and institutions that are human, socially supremely ethical. egalitarian, rather than material, individualistic and selfish. Poverty in this sense is an extremely potent force for the revolutionary transformation society, but only when it is noted not for what it lacks-goods and services—but for what it possesses, namely the primacy of human, social and moral values and relationships.

From this perspective it becomes important to bear in mind that the poverty and economic or technological backwardness of India are not hindrances on the way to radical transformation but positive factors. One basic element of the mass line. if it is to be successfully implemented, must be to seek the positive, the dynamic forces in the situation of the masses as they are This is essential in order today. not to treat the masses as mere objects of the plans and actions of those who claim to be their leaders. Even more important, the goals and values of the transformation are present in the condition of the masses; these values must be articulated and brought to the fore in order that economic or technological development will be guided and controlled by values that are con-

sciously held and are at the same time rooted in the conditions of the people, but revalued and transformed by them. If we wait for the masses to become economically better off, to absorb modern values, before they assert and liberate themselves, we shall wait in vain. Whoever nurses the masses in the initial preparatory period will inevitably implant his values in them and mould the developmental process as a whole. Control over the initial phase of the process of change is crucial: whichever group exercises this initial control will enjoy a great advantage over others in moulding the subsequent phases of the transformation.

From this point of view it is significant that a large bulk of the Indian masses have boycotted the process of modernization controlled by the foreign-oriented upper classes. The masses have preferred to remain illiterate. In particular, the minorities such as the scheduled castes, the tribes, and significant segments of the population such as the Muslims, have rejected modernization despite the tremendous pressure brought to bear upon them and the temptations put in their way. But it is clear that the time is running out for them. The monster of exploitative industrial-educational development is chewing its way into every nook and corner of our society.

How will the process of mass awakening begin? Who will take the initiative? Especially, will educate the educators? Obviously, in the first stage the process must be self-initiated and selfmotivated. Young people in different parts of the country are astir, all of them seeking a way out of the exploitative educational and economic system. They need guidance but, more than that, they need self-confidence. They need protection against the subtle pressure and blandishments of the establishment. Above all, it is necessary that we discover practical ways to channel the discontent that stalks our colleges and universities into creative channels of the radical transformation. This is a task in which all who have the well-being of the masses at heart will join.

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Structural change

P C JOSHI

THE poser considers mass employment to be one of the major objectives of a mass line. Before discussing the issue of mass employment, it is necessary first to clarify certain general issues of a new approach to development raised by the poser. Picking out relevant phrases from the poser, its main points can be summarised as follows.

- (i) The first phase of our democratic experiment covering twenty-five years since independence is now over. It was a phase in which the aspirations of the people were aroused but the broad picture of affluence and poverty remained relatively unaffected by growth achieved during this period.
- (ii) The mass of our people want substantial changes in their basic living conditions within their life-time. If it cannot be done in a democracy, they will seek other ways. supposedly wise and patient Indian people cannot be expected to tolerate a status quo situation in perpetuity. recent shifts in power alignments and personalities within the amorphous Congress Party are indicative of new trends. The mounting aspirations of the people have begun to create a new quality of pressure on policy making.
- (iii) If the democratic system is to survive, the approach which was followed during the last

twenty five years has to be changed. Under this old approach every advance throws up a multitude of new crises. A new approach has, therefore, become imperative. Under the new approach every theory and plan will be tested on the basis of what it is likely to do for the mass of the people. The 'mass line' should thus become a touchstone or a 'talisman'.

(iv) The mass line means a sharp break with the past, with the middle classes in the saddle. It also means a break with the dreams of affluence which are cherished by the middle classes but which can neither be fulfilled nor are worthy of being fulfilled.

The mass line means that the 'base' should become the centre of concern, the base which comprises the peasant, the craftsman, the worker, the student, the homeless and the hungry.

(v) A mass line can be evolved and implemented only if we stir ourselves out of the old grooves. We need, not borrowed but new concepts which make sense in our social setting. We need to change not just the content of planning but also the frame of planning. A mass line can serve as a catalyst at all levels—intellectual, political and economic.

The poser in my opinion has some serious gaps but it also makes

some significant points which need elaboration.

The poser has the merit of raising very sharply the question of new political imperatives which necessitate a far greater concern for the mass of the people at the base of the economic structure in future planning for economic and social development. In fact, as the poser very rightly suggests, any approach to development which does not take serious cognizance of this new factor of growing mass awakening will lose all relevance in the Indian context. And a political leadership which does not earnestly try to channelise mass energy into developmental activities is also bound to lose its support and influence much sooner than it had ever imagined. And this involvement of the masses of the people in the task of devecopment cannot be done without 'a mass line'.

The formulation of a mass line assumes urgency also because the normal processes of growth do not automatically encompass the teeming millions at the base of the economic structure. This has been fully corroborated by the experience of most developing countries including India in recent years. In fact, so far as these poverty-stricken millions are concerned, the destabilising consequences of growth are far more pronounced than its economically and socially uplifting impact. More concretely speaking, the masses at the bottom may be uprooted from the traditional social and economic structure without being absorbed into the modern structure. Thus, while a country may be showing economic and social progress in aggregative terms, economic and social conditions of the mass of the people at the bottom may be deteriorating relatively if not also in some cases absolutely. And this disturbance in traditional life-patterns of the masses occurs alongside a fundamental re-orientation in their social outlook and consciousness as a sequel to adult franchise, and other political and cultural changes following the end of colonial rule.

Thus, while the traditional psychology of contentment yields place to a torment of desires and an

awareness of rights, the proverbial attitude of tolerance also gets eroded. This new social psychological situation can serve as a source of tremendous energy for social change if it is properly capitalised by the political leadership. It can also serve as a source of social unrest and political instability, having counter-productive consequences all along the line. What needs to be emphasised is the tremendous lag which now exists between the rapid pace of political change in the sense of fast-growing radicalisation of the masses and the slow pace of economic change specially in terms of substantial change in their living conditions. The greater this lag, the more explosive the over-all social situation.

he seriousness of the social situation has been vaguely perceived by the more imaginative elements of the political leadership in India. That the new winds of political change require a direct attack on the social and economic problems of the masses has also been vaguely perceived by them. An even sharper perception of this situation has been shown by certain elements in the advanced countries like the President of the World Bank, Robert S. McNamara, in one of his recent pronouncements.1 McNamara describes very forcefully how in poor countries development occurs but it does not reach the poor people constituting about 40% of the entire population in any decisive

He emphasises the urgency of a direct attack on the problem of mass poverty in the following words:

When the highly privileged are few and the desperately poor are many—when the gap between them is worsening rather than improving—it is only a question of time before a decisive choice must be made between the political costs of reform and the political risk of a revolution.

'That is why policies specifically designed to reduce the deprivation among the poorest 40% in developing countries are prescriptions not only of principle but of prudence. Social justice is not merely a moral imperative. It is a political imperative as well.' ³

M cNamara also rebuts the arguments of those who suggest that growth will in the long run look after the problem of poverty and in the short turn either nothing much can be done or some effort can be made to reduce the conflict

life is neither satisfying nor decent.

"Their nation might be developing but their lives are not The miracle of the Green Revolution may have arrived, but for the most part the poor farmer has not been able to participate in it.

'His nation may have doubled or tripled its educational budget, and in the capital city there may be an impressive university. But for 300 million children of poor farmers like himself there are still no schools — and for hundreds of millions of others, if a school, no qualified teacher — and if a qualified teacher, no adequate books

'His nation may be improving its communications and jet aircraft may be landing at its international airport in increasing numbers. But for the poor farmer who has seldom seen an aeroplane and never an airport, what communication really means. Is an all-weather pucca road that would allow him to get his meagre harvest to market when the time is right and the prices are good. Let us be candid.

'What these men want are jobs, for their survival, food for their families, and a future for their children. They want the simple satisfaction of working towards some thing better: towards an end to misery and a beginning of hope We are not talking here about a few maladjusted discontents.

'We are talking about hundred of millions of desperately poor people throughout the world. We are talking about 40% of the entire populations. Development is simply not reaching them in any decisive degree. Their countries are growing in gross economic terms. But their individual lives are stagnating in human terms. (Ibid, pp. 10-11)'

3. Ibid, p 15

Robert S. McNamara, President, World Bank Groups, Address to The Board of Governors, Washington, September 25, 1972.

McNamara describes this process of development without participation of the poor in a very telling manner. To quote.

^{&#}x27;To many in the affluent world to be a farmer suggests a life of dignity and decency, free of the irritation and pollution of modern existence; a life close to nature and rich in satisfactions.

^{· &#}x27;But for hundreds of millions of these subsistence farmers (in poor countries)

between growth and more equitable income for the poor.

He observes: 'A decade may be short-term for the development planner. But a decade is the long term for a subsistence tenant farmer whose children are most likely to die before the age of five, whose diet is already so inadequate that he cannot stave off chronic ill-health, whose illiteracy limits his future ability to learn new skills and whose perpetual indebtedness to the money-lender and dependence on the landowner leave him neither options nor hope.'

McNamara therefore suggests various programmes—employment projects, institutional reforms, shifts in patterns of public expenditure etc.—for an attack on the problem of poverty.

This concern for the poor of the poor countries at the top centres of wealth and power in advanced countries is a pointer of the changing social situation in the poor countries. But the prescriptions suggested for an attack on poverty at the highest levels ignore some of the basic impediments to implementing an anti-poverty programme in these countries. McNamara's address is a significant example of raising the question of mass poverty without clear identification of the conditions which breed and perpetuate poverty and of the forces which obstruct any massive attack on it. The main weakness of the poser also lies in its failure to draw attention to the impediments to formulating and implementing a mass line.

In this connexion it is necessary to rely not on a priori reasoning alone but to draw upon the rich experience of various developmental programmes which were conceived in India in the past with the special objective of ameliorating the conditions of the masses. In fact, it is not concern for the poor at the ideological level which has been lacking in India since the very beginning of independence. It is the great discrepancy between concern at the ideological level and half-hearted action if not lack of action at the grass roots which has been the most important characteristic of the Indian situation.

Why did the benefits from the Community Development Programme, The New Agricultural Strategy, The Small Farmers Developmental Agency, Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Programme, The Rural Works Programmes, The Literacy and Education Programmes and so on and and so forth not accrue in substantial measure to the poor?

What is the guarantee that in future the same story will not be repeated in implementing a new mass line? These are important questions to which satisfactory answers should be sought through an intensive exploration of actual conditions in different parts of the country. The poser has very rightly drawn attention to the fact that 'limited surveys have so far been undertaken of the living conditions of our people.' And even the evaluation of programmes for the poor has been very deficient if not also very defective. The basic causes of poverty as also the basic impediments to the attack on poverty are soft-pedalled in evaluation studies.

A recent example is provided by the Address on Rural Development For Weaker Sections: Experience and Lessons by B. S. Minhas, Member, Planning Commission. Minhas draws attention to the inadequacies of recent programmes sponsored for improving conditions of the rural poor. But he does not go beyond the proximate causes into an analysis of deeper social-structural resistances to these programmes. In our view the major factor responsible for the failure of anti-poverty programmes is that they are subordinate to so-called growth programmes. This dichotomy between 'growth programmes' and 'anti-poverty programmes' arises because, under the given economic structure, material resources are concentrated at one end in the hands of a minority of landlords, rich peasants, moneylenders and trading interests while the human resources (i.e., labour power) are concentrated at another pole among small and marginal

farmers, landless labourers and small artisans, etc.

If growth has to be brought about without a fundamental change in the economic structure, the planner has to concentrate on the former, i.e., on the stronger section of society. But this growth programme does not encompass the weaker sections of society which constitute the largest section if not the majority. For this weaker section, therefore, anti-poverty programmes are devised. In a social and political structure dominated by the stronger sections the antipoverty programme has always a subordinate place; it lies outside the mainstream of developmental activity. Even if it is fully implemented, its potentiality to bring about any 'substantial change in the living conditions of the mass of the people within a generation' would be open to serious doubt.

It is this deep inner cleavage within the society between a resource-rich minority and a resource-poor majority which constitutes the major limitation of all anti-poverty prescriptions offered in the recent period. Any attack on poverty without reference to this dissociation of labour power from the control of resources has therefore very limited anti-poverty potential.

That the concern for rapid economic growth has generally in the past led to major reliance on the privileged classes in society is admitted by the fourth five-year plan draft report.⁴ What the plan-

^{&#}x27;The mability to mitigate in any significant measure the mequalities of income and wealth is a reflection of the dilemmas which arise in the present phase of development. The concern for achieving the desired increased in production in the short-run often necessitates concentration of effort in areas and on classes of people who already have the capability to respond to growth opportunities. This consideration shaped the strategy of intensive development of irrigated agriculture Output increases more rapidly in areas which have the basic infra-structure. The operation of programmes of assistances related to size of production tends to benefit the large producers in the private sector. A small number of business houses with experience and resources have been able to take greater advantage of the expansion of opportunities for profitable investment'. (Fourth Five Year Plan Draft 1969-74, p. 9)'

ners and policy-makers do not concede is that the economic imbalances and social tensions generated by this reliance on the stronger section can be tackled only to a meager extent by ancillary antipoverty programmes. Thus, a massive dent into the problem of poverty cannot be contemplated without a break from this strategy of growth through 'betting on the strong'.

In other words, the strategy of growth itself should transform itself into a strategy of eliminating poverty. If the dichotomy between, 'growth programme' and poverty programme' continues, then under the given framework growth itself tends to accentuate the problem of poverty. It may be noted that in many poor countries, including India, the 'Green Revolution' itself has tended to accentuate the problem of poverty in a similar way as the classical 'Enclosure Movement' accentuated the problem of Pauperism in eighteenth century England.

A study of the Green Revolution in South East Asia has drawn the following conclusions regarding its employment effects.

'The special problem posed for South East Asia by the Green Revolution can therefore be stated as follows: the faster the rate of adoption of the Green Revolution technology, the greater will be the benefits in reduced costs of food and resources released from agriculture. If productive uses are found for this land and labour, and methods are devised for cushioning the dislocation that this will entail, a rapid rate of adoption of the Green Revolution will provide the possibility for further advances in agricultural productivity, a more diversified food supply and a more rapid rate of economic growth. If productive uses are not found for the released resources and policies are not adopted which can ameliorate the dislocation effects, a rapid rate of the adoption of the Green Revolution technology could accentuate the employment problem and the problem of the unsuited areas, and raise additional economic, social and political complications.'5

In many poor countries the social complications arising from the Green Revolution are perhaps more immediate than its possible growth-propelling effects. One can in fact ask whether in over-populated Asian countries the Green Revolution or 'the cash-intensive package method' provides the best mechanism of combining increase of agricultural output with increase of employment opportunities; whether one should not explore intermediate level technologies (like extension of irrigation facilities leading to multiple cropping) for involving vast masses of small peasants in growth programmes.

In a very perceptive work called Agricultural Development Strategies in Asia, Shingeru Ishikawa has presented insights having relevance also for India. He has called for creating 'an agrarian system in which both profitability and collective welfare work as complementary motivating forces for agricultural progress and both the modern and the traditional inputs are used effectively in a scientific manner.'6 Ishikawa shows that the new technology under the given conditions has created strong pressures against these two requirements of combining profitability with collective welfare and of modern with traditional inputs.7 Drawing upon Ishikawa it may be said that the new strategy, in fact from the social point of view, may be much more costly than an alternative strategy which, as a supplement to modern inputs, utilises to the maximum the traditional resources like farming labour, farm yard manures, animal power and small scale land im-

Longman, London, 1971.

provements to minor works for flood control and irrigation.8

This possibility of the use of traditional inputs may also ease the pressure on centralised funds in so far as modern inputs as opposed to the traditional are wholly cashintensive. The excessive neglect of local resources inherent in the new strategy is thus curbed.⁹

Further, the new strategy also precipitates anti-tenant, anti-poor peasant, and anti-farm-labourer changes in the agrarian system in so far as it pushes into prominence a class of commercially motivated large farmers from the former landlords and rich peasants. The profit motive of this class runs counter to the motive of collective welfare. By disturbing the economic life of the small peasants and labourers the new strategy contributes to social tension and instability. An alternative strategy which provides scope for middle and small peasants would have the opposite effect; it would stabilise the economic fortunes of the small peasants and thus also contribute to social stability.

In other words, the question of an attack on mass poverty and on the problem of unemployment and underemployment cannot be dissociated from the overall strategy of agricultural and industrial development; it cannot be dissociated from the hard choices both in the realm of technology and the property structure.

It would be wrong, therefore, to treat the mass line as an appendage to a growth strategy within the established economic and technological framework. The mass line should involve vital decisions concerning not only the pace of growth but also the institutional pattern and composition of growth.

A genuine mass line can never be the gift of a city-dwelling, benevolent upper or middle class to the suffering masses. It has always been the fruit of productive mobilisation of the masses at the grass roots.

^{5.} Harry Walters and Joseph Willett, 'The Green Revolution In South East Asia in the 1970s' in Southeast Asia's Economy In The 1970s, Asian Development Bank,

Shigeru Ishikawa, Agricultural Development Strategies In Asia. Case Studies of the Phillipines and Thailand, The Asian Development Bank, 1970, p. 116, pp. 116—117.

^{7.} Ibid, Chapter IV.

^{8.} Ibid, p. 126.

^{9.} Ibid, p. 127

Books

VALUES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: The

Indian Challenge by V.K.R.V. Rao, Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1971.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT

by Amritananda Das, The Minerva Associates, Calcutta, 1970.

STRATEGY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT by

J. J Anjaria, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona, 1971.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT by

Rajni Kothari, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona, 1971.

The integration of economic development with human and social values, the creation of a social and political democracy side by side with economic growth and development, the reconciling of human dignity and civil liberty with economic efficiency, are probably more desirable to achieve in the life of a nation than the mere conquest of the material world. It is this philosophy that makes it imperative for freedom and development to coexist and to combine right from the earlier stages of economic development in any country.

Dr. Rao joins issue with Joan Robinson who once said that the purpose of studying economics is not to acquire a set of readymade answers to economic questions, but to learn how to avoid being deceived by economists. The economist is indeed not the sole guide in the choice of the method or model for economic development. It is rather the social and cultural values cherished by a nation that must determine the

type of development that the country should strive for.

Brilliantly making his point across to an average reader, V.K.R.V. Rao places the general setting of the question of values in the first part and considers them in the Indian context in the second part of this book. Analysing the Indian problem in a down-to-earth manner, he says, 'If employment nevertheless has to be provided on a large enough scale, investment that can be made available per worker will be very low, which means, in turn, that methods of production followed will be traditional rather than modern, which, in turn. means that we will not be creating an industrial society.' However, in the same breath, he agrees that an industrial society has to be created if we are to have economic growth. So, then, the creation of a dual sector economy must come about as a natural corollary. The modern sector would be highly productive and progressive, and the other traditional one backward and with low productivity. Naturally, while nursing both the sectors effectively, conflict in values would be inevitable. And to resolve it becomes the crux of the problem for a viable growth model in a developing economy. The book competently handles issues like nationalism, science and technology, ethics and economic development.

In refreshing contrast, Amritananda Das examines why the mixed economy concept has failed, if at all, in developing countries for bringing about the full potentialities of growth. Discussing the relative merits of the four major paths of economic progress, viz., the classical free-enterprise path, the Japanese model, the Soviet experiment and the mixed economy, the author, however, does not commend any of them. He starts by establishing the important proposition that the international differentials in income reflect the degree to which primitive entrepreneurship has succeeded in evolving into modern, high entrepreneurship. The irresistible conclusion is that it is the choice of entrepreneurial agents and the creation of an appropriate socio-political environment for the dynamic evo-

lution of entrepreneurial patterns that are so crucial for exploiting the genius of a country.

As such, the main thrust of the author's argument boils down to this—that investment by itself cannot be used as a substitute for progress. 'We are, in consequence, thrown back on our basic idea that unless the socio-economic evolution of the backward economies leads to the improvement in the quality and supply of entrepreneurship, there are no prospects at all for reaching affluence through the mechanical accumulation of capital.' There is no doubt that the author rightly highlights the great need for developing entrepreneurial talent in developing economies.

The last two of the above four publications are brochures that reproduce the R. R. Kale Memorial lectures delivered by the authors in 1969 and 1971 respectively at the Gokhale Institute. Anjaria finds abundant evidence of strong developmental impulses within the Indian economy. He makes a pertinent observation when he says that the test for a good strategy for development is how far it promotes economic prosperity without generating excessive tensions in the process. Indeed, such tensions could arise from a markedly uneven distribution of the gains and sacrifices involved in economic development, as between different sections of the community. author then dwells upon the basic strategies as he finds them in the first four five-year plans of this country. He concludes that the kind of agricultural breakthrough in recent years would not have taken place but for the tremendous gains secured in the industrial sector over the last decade and a half.

As for licensing and controls, the author would like them to be applied only sparingly. 'While, in principle, a licensing policy is a necessary part of the coordinated advance of investment in the public and private sectors, and should not readily be given up, the hard fact that administrative procedures act as a drag on the revival of investment activity on the needed scale has, in practice, to be recognised.' However, the moot question remains as to whether the present licensing policy was designed and has really served the purpose of coordinating investment in the private and public sectors. I believe the actual experience does not confirm this view. It is rather disappointing to find that controls and licenses have had, by and large, a negative role to play in our economy.

Rajni Kothari, with the logic of a theoretician, makes a fervent plea for developing normative standards so as to transcend both political and economic considerations for providing criteria against which performance in both these spheres could be judged and analysed. 'Too much stress on the analytical at the expense of the normative produces an intellectual environment in which it is difficult to relate anything.' He asks: What are the values that the State ought to strive for? According to him, three values could be conceived of, viz., justice, people's participation and adoption of non-violence. As such, the author gives no credence to the conventional way of judging people's standard of living merely by

the GNP concept. At the same time, however, it should be recognised that the norms of 'minimum' and 'maximum' are not mere economic formulations; they are part of a certain conception of a good and desirable life. The norm of a necessary shift from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban structure based on large scale industrialisation may not be the best thing that human intelligence has devised.

The author ends up with the remark that the policy process, the utilisation of knowledge and intelligence, and statecraft as a whole, are embodiments of reason. Institutional structures of participation, justice and non-violence, on the other hand, are conditions of man's realisation of his freedom. It is the function of economic science to mobilize the processes of reason for the realisation of freedom. And political science should ensure that freedom does not degenerate into privilege of the few and manipulation of the many.

Navin Chandra Joshi

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH ASIA

Proceedings of a Conference held by IEA at Kandy: edited by E.A.G. Robinson and Michael Kidron (Macmillan), 1970.

To judge a book by its cover is unwise. In this case, however, even the introduction seems to be misleading. Austin Robinson makes the conference appear like a joint prayer meeting of Hindus and Muslims, whereas in fact, the economists from both India and Pakistan seem to be quite complacent as regards achievements and confident as regards aspirations, whether personal or professional. The stress laid by the Pakistanis on regional disparities, and consequently their 'deliver us from evil' tone has been indicated by the emergence of Bangla Desh. This, by itself, should cheer us up but for the Indians being stuck at 'give us this day our daily bread', which again, is justifiable in terms of the 15 million ton shortage of foodgrains this year. Nevertheless, the approach is fresh, with a trendy drift towards political economy. Apart from Raj, whose quest for statistical and sociological empiricism is laudable, it may be safely said of the rest, 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread'. But more of this later.

In the first section, a study by Ashok Mitra, of the disparate growth rates of foodgrains output in India, is incisive. The paper shows how procurement and distribution are an increasing function of this disparity. Moreover, the relative income distribution as between different States is determined by the act of price determination of foodgrains. In so far as food crop producing regions bargain with cash crop States, this could lead to inoptimal allocation of the scarce factor, land.

The problem of economic measurement is familiar enough. Rudra postulates that parametric growth rates are better than implicit rates and the choice of a function cannot be based on theory but has to be selected with reference to the policy decision framework. People were agreed on this in the discussion,

but it is tragic that with such mathematical sound and fury, all that Rudra concludes is that the Indian economy was stagnant between 1950-1967. May be there is a point in being rigorous where something is intuitively obvious, but surely not at the cost of being unintelligible even to a learned gathering! However, in view of criticism aroused by Taufiq Khan's paper which obscured east-west disparities by the use of the national aggregates, we might grant Rudra his point.

To group Swadesh Bose's paper alongside Raj's, is peculiar practice. Both might be clamouring for irrigation programmes, but Raj's paper goes on an entirely different wavelength. He is studying the constraints to an expansion of the new agricultural strategy, which he finds in the forms of tenancy prevailing in different regions and warns against the dangers of overestimating the potentialities of growth.

Huq and Bagchi study the dynamics of the system where the private sector tussles with the public sector and, with tying of aid, import substitution schemes and industrial licensing thrown in, we end up with excess capacity in an underdeveloped country.

The discussion on the choice of techniques is interesting. The papers, by Srinivasan and Azizur Rahman Khan, are elegant. As the old man, J. P. Neogi, once commented, one must never confuse elegance with relevance. And, as Raj and Sen point out, in our context, elegance is being adopted at the cost of relevance. The range of technological substitution is large in both countries. The policy implications of the two papers are clear, though. Khan's paper indicates that uncertainty about foreign exchange is one cause of over extension of capacity; Srinivasan says that planning is jeopardized by uncertainty regarding the choice of techniques. Paradoxically, foreign aid increases this uncertainty by allowing private foreign investors to introduce a new, unknown technology.

Sen's treatment of feasibility constraints is brilliant. And his sifting power is evident from the major emphasis he lays on the guarantee of a minimum consumption level as the major political constraint. Incorporating the objective of a minimum consumption level, into a mathematical model, he shows how the 'zone of choice' of a planner in India and Pakistan is very small. This paper is significant if only because it exposes the Sancho Panza role of economists in the quixotic economic planning by most underdeveloped countries.

Rahman's paper is indeed remarkable. He argues rigorously to establish a link between wages and productivity and tries to shatter the myth of higher consumption and growth being incompatible. His paper makes a valuable point in showing that an increase in investments could be achieved by reordering consumption. Moreover, a rising wage rate, by expanding the market, might help reduce excess capacity.

Robinson's remark, 'the achievements of the planners of Ceylon left us all aware of how much more might be done with similar ingenuity in the way of

regional planning in India and Pakistan,' should be enough to evoke an interest in the two papers by Jayawardana and Hewavitharana.

The international mobility of economists being very high, especially with the UN acting as a travel agency, it is very difficult to bring the theorists in this field to books. Of course, people like Bhagwati, who goes to the extent of ignoring political realities and geographical boundaries, may be safely slurred over. His allergy to Sen's paper gives him away. Nurul Islam's is a fascinating analysis of the types of exports from Pakistan which have grown most. He reveals the extent to which these depended on plentiful low-cost labour and low capital intensity.

In conclusion, one may point out two aspects of this conference: Firstly, a drift, as I noted earlier, towards political economy, is evident. But what is still not quite clear is whether Raj's empiricism or Sen's methods of abstraction is the correct Marxist approach. Secondly, in a conference, one looks not for ideas, but for an exchange of ideas. How much the Indians gained from the Pakistanis is anybody's guess, especially since Pakistan's main problem was shown to be the regional imbalance between East and West, and the East no longer exists.

Amitabh Mukhopadhyay

INDIA INDEPENDENT by Charles Bettelheim, First

Modern Reader Paperback Edition, Monthly

Review Press, New York, 1971.

A quarter of a century ago the C.P.I., following the internationalist line of the CPSU, was claiming that India was not independent. The other involved party, i.e., those who were now free to rule the roost, vehemently asserted that just the opposite was the case. However, the reality is not as simple as the framing of a constitution, or the changing strategy and tactics of a C.P.I. Nor does it lend itself to the flexible formula of quantitative changes leading to qualitative changes—a formula that helps to tide many a Communist Party tactician over 'dialectical' embarrassment. It is simply a question of being honest to oneself and to the Indian reality. And it is precisely here that many a 'committed' Indian intellectual fails, and miserably at that.

Charles Bettleheim's India Independent (original French text 1962) is then a point of departure from the sociology of ignorance to the sociology of knowledge of the political economy of India since 1947. That he has not felt the need to rehaul the original text in any substantial way is proof of the essential correctness of his major conclusion: of India caught up in a blind alley of a semi-feudal-semi-colonial set up.

Whatever the inner class dimensions of the charismatic Gandhi be, we would not be doing violence to the movement he led, if we characterised it as a 'bourgeois-democratic' movement in a colonial setting—a farcical bourgeois-democratic movement. Gandhi's attitude to the dominant classes in rural India after Chauri-chaura in 1922, the 'Bombay Plan' of 1944

and its link with the National Planning Committee and the subsequent economic history of Independent India are proof enough.

Bettleheim, who has been watching India's economy ever since the Bombay Plan days (cf. his 'Un plan economique pour le development de l'Inde' in the Revue Economique et Sociale, March 1946.) presents an integrated picture of the political economy of India since independence. The idea, it seems, is to show in a scholarly and conclusive way the development of India's productive forces at different historical stages of development and how the existing relations of production are acting as fetters on them. The result is a work of massive scholarship and acute insight.

Part I explores the social and economic structure of the country, particularly that of rural India; the formation of a bourgeoisie and the accumulation of capital; the industrialization process; the role of the proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie; and the over-all political structure.

Part II shows the extent of India's economic development and the structural obstacles that bring all high sounding economic thinking to nothing. Bettle-heim's plea is for fundamental structural changes in the Indian society.

Here are some of Bettleheim's conclusions on certain major aspects of India's development:

On land reforms: 'The efficacy of the reforms undertaken so far has been limited by a desire to respect the interests of the richer rural classes with whom the Congress Party and the Indian bourgeoisie are in close touch. Both agrarian reforms and the co-operatives show the same defects.'

On Capitalism in India: 'The fact that the capitalist sector receives a large part of the national income means that its productive powers are highly developed. It also means that it has a very strong position in the non-capitalist sector, which it has gained by using pre-capitalist methods. In other words, the capitalist system of production in India is not so highly developed as the real income in the capitalist sector would suggest.'

On Foreign Capital: 'Foreign capital... is mainly used for producing large investment surpluses. It must therefore be judged in comparison with similar domestic capital, that is to say capital invested in big industry, mining, plantations, banking and big business... Foreign capital can therefore be said to share the control of the Indian economy on a fifty-fifty basis.'

On State Capitalism: '... State Capitalism has not succeeded in accomplishing the two major tasks which are essential to a development policy in India. It has not been able to mobilize the unemployed productive forces on a large scale, nor has it managed to provide a substantial increase in the rate of national accumulation. Consequently, growth past and present has to depend on foreign financial aid.'

Thus, feels Bettleheim, social contradictions will be increasing, both those which inevitably go with the

development of capitalism, and those caused by the slow disappearance of a traditional society. The latter type will certainly cause the greatest suffering and, especially in rural districts, it may be a question of life and death—of struggle.

Isn't this what Punjab, the land of 'Green Revolution' has been witnessing of late? But the real question is, whither Bhatinda, whither Sangrur?

Shahid Amin

TOWARDS SOCIALISTIC TRANSFORMATION OF INDIAN ECONOMY ed. by Ashok V. Bhuleshkar. Popular Prakashan, Bombay, May 1972.

This is the second volume of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Series which appears to be the brainchild of it's editor, Ashok Bhuleshkar. In his own words, 'the object of the series is to expound the economic ideology of Nehru and to present at the same time a broad picture of India's planned economic progress'. The first of these two professed objectives imposes a rather serious limitation on the collection. Nehru's 'economic ideology' was firmly cast in the mould of western liberalism, which gave short shrift to Marxism. Bhuleshkar seems to share this aversion which is reflected in the fact that not one of the papers included in this collection is remotely Marxist. Whatever one might have against Marxism, it is certainly a very valid economic point of view and cannot really be neglected. Furthermore, Nehru was more of a 'Sunday economist' than one who had any real grasp of the fundamentals of economics.

Bhuleshkar seems to follow in the same tradition. As he appears to have been solely responsible for selecting the contributors to this volume, most of the articles reflect the same muddle that characterised Nehru's economic thinking. Despite all this Bhuleshkar might have taken more care to choose authors who agree on at least some basics instead of contradicting each other.

In pursuit of the secondary objective—'a broad picture of India's planned economic progress', Bhuleshkar presents us with 21 articles most of which seem to be original contributions. These articles are divided into four sections: Indian Economic Thought; Agriculture and Economic Development; Industry and Economic Development, and Monetary Policy and Economic Development. Of the four articles comprising the weak section on Indian Economic Thought, three are by foreigners. Luckily, it is the Indian, Professor A. M. Khusro, who has anything of note to say. In his brief contribution entitled 'Indian Economic Policy under Democratic Socialism' Professor Khusro points out one of the basic fallacies affecting Indian planning. That is, that unless 'welfare...is linked with production and surplus, it becomes once and for all alms giving'. A lasting welfare State can only be achieved and maintained by a sound economy, and not by imposition from above. Socialism, therefore 'must work towards rapid job creation, redistribution

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of income, and wealth and elimination of monopolistic features.' These are, of course some of the basic objectives of Indian planning, but they are often lost sight of in the rather frantic search for ever-increasing production of food grains and heavy industrial goods.

However, Professor Khusro proceeds to present one of the most important, and little-appreciated obstacles to the rapid implementation of socialism in India: the fact that our country is a parliamentary democracy. History has shown that in the few instances where both social egalitarianism and economistic growth were successfully introduced,—Cuba, China, and to a certain extent Russia, it was at the expense of individual liberty. In each case socialism was introduced from above by autocratic and repressive regimes, though, it must be stated, with very successful economic and material results. To those of us to whom 'liberty' and 'freedom' are still important it is essential to achieve the same results by way of a democratic system of government. Unfortunately, Professor Khusro does not present any solutions, but merely poses the problem. One wishes he could have spent more thought and time on his 7 page contribution instead of merely amalgamating three of his articles that appeared in the Hindustan Times in 1970.

There are five articles in the next section, three of which successively deal with the history of the cooperative movement in agriculture, its philosophy and the structure of co-operative finance without really touching on any of the fundamental problems that the co-operatives face in India. The fourth article is entitled 'Importance of Agricultural Refinance Corporation (ARC) in Indian Development', and is obviously written by an official of the ARC. Of his 10 page article, he devotes 2½ pages to a brief statement of the ARC's aims, and the remaining 8 to an abridged version of the ARC's annual report for 1970-71. That there is a saving grace to this section, is thanks to a rather thoughtful contribution by E.C. de Silva on 'Programming for Risk and Uncertainty in Development Planning with Special Reference to Indian Planning'. De Silva's basic thesis is that planning for agricultural development is too involved seeking macro goals—X million tons of wheat by Y year, and tends to overlook the welfare and prosperity of individual farmers. Unfortunately, 'an advance in the production frontier need not ... also advance the welfare of all farmers involved ... because the benefits of increments in production (may be) reaped by middlemen, or under inflationary conditions when cost increases yield no increment in net income from increase in production'.

Furthermore, an excessive preoccupation with greater food production, especially by way of new seeds and mechanization, means the disappearance of the small farmer who cannot afford new methods, as also an increase in rural unemployment. To help counter these unwholesome trends, de Silva argues convincingly for a closer understanding of the needs of individual farmers as well as a lessening of 'risk and uncertainty'. De Silva postulates that both risk and uncertainty factors can be greatly combated if—apart from the more traditional devices of crop and live-

stock insurance, co-operatives and readily available agricultural credit—agricultural planning is initiated from 'below' rather than from 'above'. He suggests that the needs of individual farmers be formed into the collective needs of a village, and the sum of the programmes of several villages be formed into the programme for a given area which can then be rationalised. This way, he says, 'the programmes will be realistic and within the potential capabilities of the farmers concerned'.

However attractive this idea might sound on paper, it will face immense problems in it's implementation. First and foremost will be the difficulty of setting up an organisational structure which will be able to reduce the needs of individual farmers into a programme for a single village, and, further, into a programme for an area. Secondly, the formulation for the plans for each village will undoubtedly be dominated by the larger and more wealthy farmers to the detriment of their smaller and less-well-off neighbours. Therefore, while the author is certainly correct in emphasising the need to pay atention to the welfare of individual farmers, the method suggested by him to effect this will be far from satisfactory.

Most of the eight articles of the section on Industry and Economic Development seem to labour under the same fallacy that characterised Nehru's economic thinking—that of dealing with industrialisation in the void. A dazzling exception is an article by T. J. Byres on 'Industrialisation, the Peasantry and the Economic Debate in Post-Independence Period'. Byres argues, quite rightly, and in plain English, that, 'unless there is a plentiful supply of foreign exchange, agriculture must, in the early years of industrialisation, provide a surplus in order to make possible the substantial capital formation that is necessary'. This aspect of development in economics has recently been recognised by Indian planners and steps are being taken to rectify the situation. However, even if we have the 'Agricultural Revolution' that everyone is talking about, it will still be a problem to transfer the financial surplus from agriculture to industry. This can best be done by introducing measures that are bound to be unpopular with the agricultural community, namely, an effective food policy for transferring grain from surplus to deficit areas; a price and income policy that will keep prices down while allowing wages to rise gradually, and a fairly heavy tax on agricultural produce and landholding. At the same time, it will be imperative to encourage agricultural production which can be done by implementing some of the measures suggested by De Silva as mentioned earlier. Byres spends the rest of his contribution in showing that this very basic relationship between agriculture and industry seems to have escaped India's planners. Indeed, given Bhuleshkar's predilictions, as also those of many of his contributors, it is altogether surprising to find Byres article included in this collection.

The other article of interest in this section is the one by Ursula Hicks on 'Industrialisation in India and it's Urban Problems'. Technically, this article belongs to a section of, say, The Sociological Consequences of Economic Development, which is conspi-

cuous by its absence. This is a very important aspect of economic growth and Ursula Hicks is the only person to deal with it in this collection. Mrs Hicks outlines the rather alarming influx into urban areas of industrial labourers and the ensuing problems. The lack of adequate housing facilities for this immigrant population is the major cause of these problems. Because of lack of housing, shanties and slums grow up which lead to sanitary problems and cause congestion and pollution leading to disease and pestulence. Consequently, urban planners should concentrate on providing housing in anticipation of a continuing influx of industrial and rural labourers.

However, Mrs Hicks argues that constructing housing estates is no solution as these degenerate very quickly into slums. Furthermore, many people prefer to sleep on the sidewalks than pay the rent in these estates, however nominal it may be. Therefore, instead of housing estates, urban planners should provide plots of land free of charge along with durable building materials. Water and, hopefully, electric connections should be in existence in these plots as also sewage and garbage disposal facilities. After that, the 'immigrants' should be free to set up 'house' the way they wish with the help of loaned tools and demonstrations of construction techniques. In addition, literacy classes and lessons in simple nutrition and hygiene should be provided. As the pressure of population has led to a fantastic increase in land prices in India, these housing plots will have to be situated on the outskirts of the cities if they are not to be exorbitantly expensive. But as this new population will need to commute to work, traffic congestion will become an increasingly serious problem. The way to overcome this is to provide separate traffic lanes for slower moving vehicles such as cycles and bullock carts but, more importantly, by providing a more extensive, well serviced and systematic public transport service. There is no doubt that Mrs. Hick's ideas will face considerable difficulties in implementation. Yet, no one can dispute that the rapidly growing urban population of the larger metropolises is a serious problem that has not been effectively tackled as yet. Urban panners could hardly do better for a start than read this clear-headed article.

There is nothing much of note in the last section, though the articles by B. D. Ghonasgi and Mansoor Ali could be read for their fairly lucid exposition of the sort of monetary policy that would facilitate economic development. Unfortunately, however, they have nothing really new to add to the existing body of literature on the subject.

It remains to be said that Bhuleshkar has failed in the second of his two objectives. The articles he has selected hardly present a broad picture of India's economic development. Two of the contributions, in fact, are polite expressions of Indo-German friendship made in the interest of continuing trade between the two countries! Furthermore, this collection does not really deal with the socialist transformation of the Indian economy as one is led to expect by the title. The consensus, if there is any, is more or less in favour of a mixed economy albiet a number of the contributors seem to prefer the capitalist system. There seems to have been no clear-cut criteria for selection of the contributions with the result that the articles range from the most generalized to the most microscopic, from the most abstract to the most simplistic without any common ground between them. Bhuleshkar also fails in his primary objective of expounding Nehru's 'economic ideology'. The few articles that deal with this either contradict what we know Nehru believed or uncritically support him without a clear understanding either of his beliefs or of the economic conditions pertaining in India.

It is a shame that, out of the four noteworthy contributions, two should be by foreigners. I am not, by any means, a chauvinist nor do I think that this is a reflection on Indian scholarship so much as a commentary on Bhuleshkar's process of selection. For both T. J. Byres and Ursula Hicks acknowledge that their ideas owe a lot to writings by Indians. Why, therefore, the editor should select foreigners to comment on the Indian economy when indigenous scholars have already done so, I do not know.

Before embarking on the next volume, I would earnestly request Bhuleshkar to do some deep thinking. He should endeavour to clarify his own stance in terms of Indian economic thinking and then consciously adopt a consistent criteria while selecting the contributions. He should also provide brief biographical information on his contributors as is, I believe, the standard practice. Last, but not least, he should do some work on his grammar, for his disregard of the use of articles in the English language is alarming to say the least. I should also mention, but only in passing, that my copy is full of the most atrocious typographical errors.

Tejeshwar Singh

THE SICK SOCIETY by Michael Tanzer, Temple Smith.

The ancients in India believed that the enlightened human being should pursue the triple goals of artha, dharma and kama. They warned that gold is the habitat of Kali (Yuga) and its possession exposed the owner to the dangers of losing both a sense of proportion as well as moral values.

Michael Tanzer's book illustrates the contemporary and universal aptitude of this ancient Indian wisdom in the context of God's Own Country where six per cent of the human race currently account for fully fifty per cent of the world's consumption. He traces the roots of the major evils besetting the USA (Vietnam, black poverty, racialism, the gold and dollar crises, the alienation of youth and intellectuals) to the organisation and control of US economic life by large profit seeking corporations run for the benefit of a tiny upper income elite owning them.

Most of the business in the USA is carried out by some 1,200,000 corporations of all sizes. 3500 of these control four-fifths or more of the total activity. A. A. Berle is quoted as saying 'Far and away the major part of the American supply and exchange

system is constituted of a few hundred (at most) clusters of corporate enterprises each of whose major decisions are determined by a central giant.' The ownership of these corporations is spread over thirty million Americans. Four-fifths of all corporate stock is however owned by the top one per cent of the wealthy (i.e., individuals with a minimum of \$60,000 assets). The top five per cent of this one per cent owned half of this group's stocks. Thus seventy-five thousand individuals with half a million dollars or more owned forty per cent of total corporate US stocks. As the profit after tax generated by US corporations amounts to forty billion dollars, the power of the upper income elite is collossal.

This power is used to influence and control political life in the US, starting with help to win elective office. The 1968 elections cost both Republicans and Democrats tens of millions of dollars each. Since 1907. corporations are forbidden by law from contributing funds to political parties. This law is circumvented by 'purchases of block tickets to fund raising dinners. supplying facilities, products or personnel as gifts or "loans", assigning the corporation's radio or TV time of advertising space to the candidate, channeling money to candidates or parties by inflating fees for legal, labor relations or public relations services, giving contributions through trade associations; and Jurchasing "advertisements" at vastly inflated prices in special convention or anniversary brochures published by a candidate or a political party.'

After the elections are successfully over the President elect inducts the power elite of corporations into the bureaucracy at the highest level. These professional managers serve the government with the clear understanding that they will return to their employers at the end of the assignment with bonuses intact. Thus, the corporate economy more or less directly controls the federal government and has a strong influence on the federal congressional, judicial and regulatory (including anti-trust) apparatus.

Tanzer specifically states that US leaders are not puppets of corporations. The overseas American commercial empire is not the outcome of a master plan to conquer the world. Both corporate power over administration as well as the growth of US involvement abroad are the outcome of the profit motive (greed) being the power unit activating economic life. 'Each major corporation... is a power center that seeks to develop monopolistic enclaves of power for itself, in competition with other corporations.'

According to Tanzer, economic interests play a major role in the foreign policy of the USA and he quotes a former US Ambassador to Russia, 'Every time the Soviet Union extends its power over another State or area, the US and Great Britain lose another normal market' and cites the cases of Taiwan and Cuba. In the former, US investment has grown from malily nothing in 1950 to millions of dollars today, while in the latter a billion dollar US investment was rendered worthless suddenly one summer. Other examples are Standard Oil of New Jersey with ten billion dollars overseas and three times the staff abroad

that the State Department has. One of the most blatant examples of direct US involvement was the overthrow of Mossadigh by the CIA under the leadership of Kermit Roosevelt, grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt. The direct benefit to the US corporate establishment was the substantial share of Anglo-Iranian's oil properties given to them. The reward to Kermit Roosevelt was his appointment as Gulf Oil's director of government relations in Washington Another was the overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala which was done in the name of anticommunism but benefitted the upper income elite of the US through restoration of major US corporation interests. The American involvement in the war in vietnam (costing 25 billion dollars a year) is the outcome of foreign policy being influenced by the economic needs of US corporations.

The problem of Black Poverty is next tackled and the simplistic view is summed up in the following quotation: 'The US has arrived at the point where poverty could be abolished easily and by a stroke of the pen. To raise every individual and family in the nation now below a subsistence level to the subsistence level would cost about \$10 billion a year. This is less than two per cent of GNP. It is less than 10% of tax revenues. It is about one-fifth of the cost of national defence.'

The continuation of Black Poverty is seen by Tanzer as a necessary precondition for the existence of the existing economic, political, social and phychological structure of American society today. The Blacks provide both for lower costs (labour) as well as higher profits (because they pay higher rents for houses and more for goods both on price and as a credit service charge).

Having established a common origin for Vietnam and Back Poverty, Tanzer proceeds to analyse alienation both amongst those (outsiders) who believe that the corporate economy too frequently produces the wrong things in terms of human welfare and unfairly distributes the goods it does produce as well as those (insiders) who feel they are cheapened, distorted and violated by the system they help to run. 'Thus the cigarette industry despite abundant evidence that it contributes to thousands of deaths every year, strenuously resists any curbing.' How government is affected is illustrated by the exchange between Emerson Forte (head of an advertising agency opposed to cigarette advertising and a representative of the Agriculture Department who was attacking Forte for failing to realise how crucial tobacco exports were for the US balance of payments. Emerson Forte: 'I guess I just don't think it is right to make a profit by killing Agriculture Department Representative: people.' 'Do you mean that you do not believe in the profit system?'

The pushing of drugs like chloromycetin, causer of aplastic anaemia, is also cited alongside the catastrophic thalidomide.

The international monetary crisis is seen by Tanzer as a struggle over the role of the US dollar against

gold on the surface and underneath it a struggle between West Europe (and Japan) and the USA over the role of American investment in those countries.

The book value of US foreign investments has risen from 12 billion dollars in 1950 to 33 billion in 1960 and stands at 75 billion today. This is an understatement as US interests in West Asia oil are taken at 1½ billion dollars, but exclude the 150 billion proven barrels underground. It does however show the pace at which US investment abroad is increasing. The spectre that haunts Europe is stated by Jean Jacques Servan Schreiber: 'Fifteen years from now it is quite possible that the world's third greatest industrial power... will be... American Industry in Europe.'

On the domestic economic crisis Tanzer feels that credit is over-extended and is likely to prove the Achilles' heel of the system and the day of reckoning is fast approaching.

Having established his thesis that the major illnesses the US society suffers from are caused by the preoccupation with profit and its pursuit by large corporations, Tanzer holds out no promise of a change for the better. A danger can arise only if the precarious balance breaks down.

The recennt Presidential election shows that there is no besetting desire for change in the United States.

Seminarist

THE MODERNIZATION IMPERATIVE AND INDIAN PLANNING by Baldev Raj Nayar, Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1972.

The book is perhaps one of the first attempts to study the linkage between politics and economic planning in India. It examines in depth the political aims and implications of the Mahalanobis model of economic strategy which was dovetailed in the second plan and continued until the close of the third plan-a model built on the rationale that 'expansion of the capital stock is the basis of growth in national income, that the capital stock can be increased only through investment, that investment is dependent upon the availability of investment or capital goods, and therefore the supply of investment goods should be increased by the development of investment goods industries': coal, electricity, iron and steel, heavy machinery, basic chemicals, fertilizers; in short, what the second new approach paper on the fifth plan, produced under D. P. Dhar's stewardship, calls the 'core sector'.

The book makes a revealing study of the nationwide controversy which the Mahalanobis plan frame generated at that time, the strong support which Nehru and his colleagues lent to it and the reasons why they did so—their political aims and motivations; and why, despite this powerful support and faithful adherence to the strategy for over 10 years, it failed to deliver the promised goods. In undertaking this study the author is, however, not so much concerned with the technical or theoretical deficiencies of the Mahalanobis model as with its political inconsistencies vis-a-vis the political

framework adopted by the country. The analysis reveals four major inconsistencies: 'one, it (the second plan) was an extremely ambitious need based rather than a resource-based plan, imposing "forced-savings' on the community; two, the emphasis on heavy industry meant the postponement of immediate "pay-offs" or "gratifications"; three, the lack of emphasis on agriculture and consumer goods placed restraints on mass consumption; four, the burdens and tasks assumed by the government were beyond its skills and organizational resources'.

These inconsistencies, as the author points out, became increasingly apparent with every successive year of plan implementation. All the strains that were feared came to the fore: 'an excessive drain on foreign exchange resulting in a crisis for the plan; hurried attempts to prune the plan to a "core"; increased dependence on foreign aid; stringent control on foreign exchange transactions; rise in prices; failure to meet the food production and employment targets.'

Despite these difficulties, 'the basic strategy was persisted with in the third plan. This was in spite of the much more shrill criticism of the Lok Sabha at the time of the adoption of the third plan.' What were the possible reasons for this 'passionate attachment' to an apparently unsuccessful strategy of growth? Or, was it a failure on the part of the political leadership to gauge the political consequences inherent in it? The author's answer is 'no'.

He puts forth the view, supported by compelling documentary evidence, that the basic political motivations favouring the choice or adoption of the 'core sector' strategy of growth in the developing countries like India 'are crucially rooted in the aims of political sovereignty, military security, and economic independence'. To drive his point home, he quotes Nehru extensively. In a meeting of the National Development Council in 1954, Nehru thus admitted that the development of heavy industry or the 'core sector' would contribute little to employment but was nonetheless necessary to meet the defence needs of the country. To critics who wanted five-year plans put aside so that there could be immediate concentration on defence, Nehru sharply answered: 'But the Five Year Plan is the defence plan of the country. What else is it? Because, defence does not consist in people going about marching up and down the road with guns and other weapons. Defence consists today in a country being industrially prepared for producing the goods and equipment of defence...building up heavy industry, iron and steel, machine making plants, and production of oils'.

The author's unorthodox perspectives on the political motivations of economic planning in India and his analysis of Indian socio-economic problems are a definite contribution to the study of the politics of planning. The critics and supporters of the second new approach paper on the fifth plan would do well to have a careful look at the book before committing the country to any particular strategy of growth.

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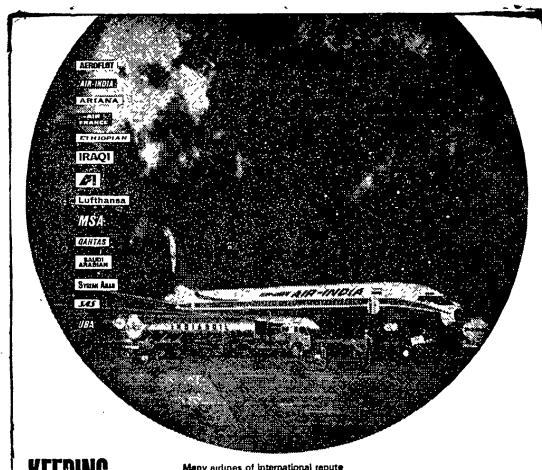
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